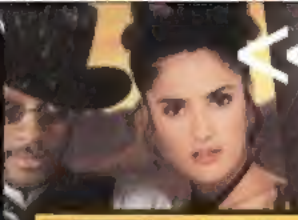

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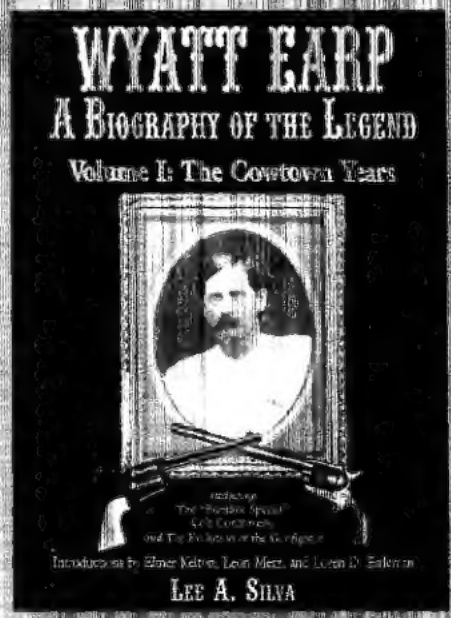
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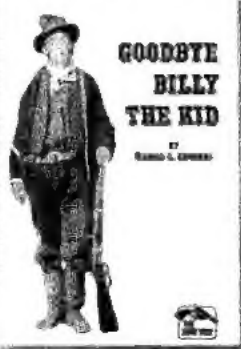

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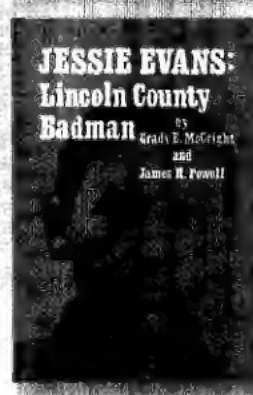

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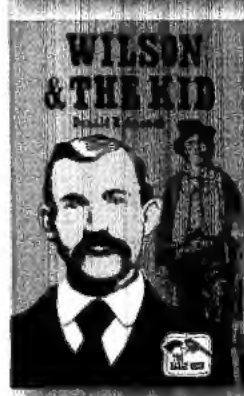

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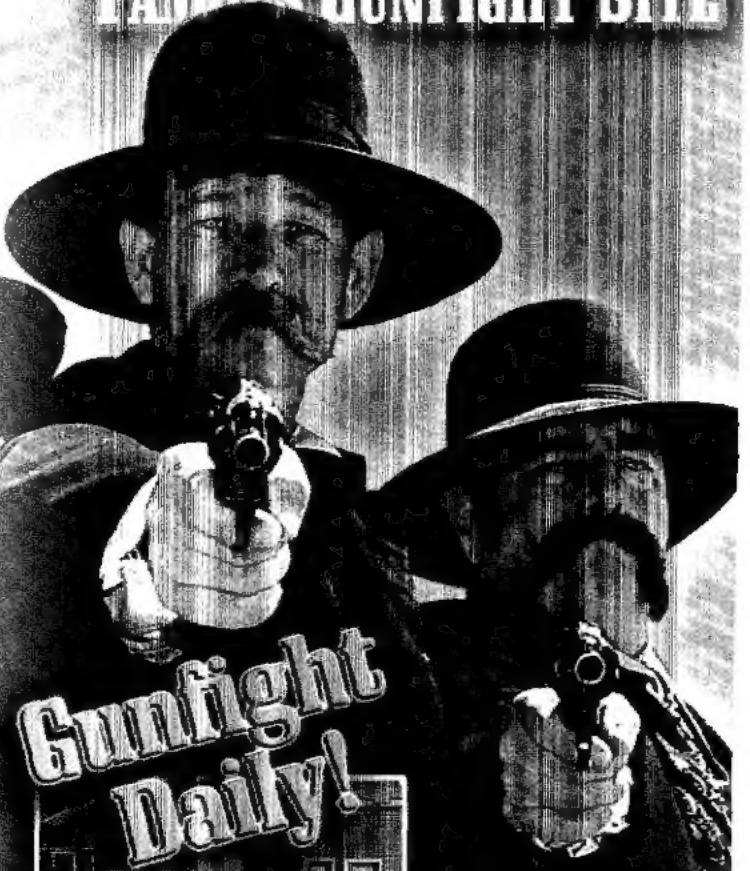

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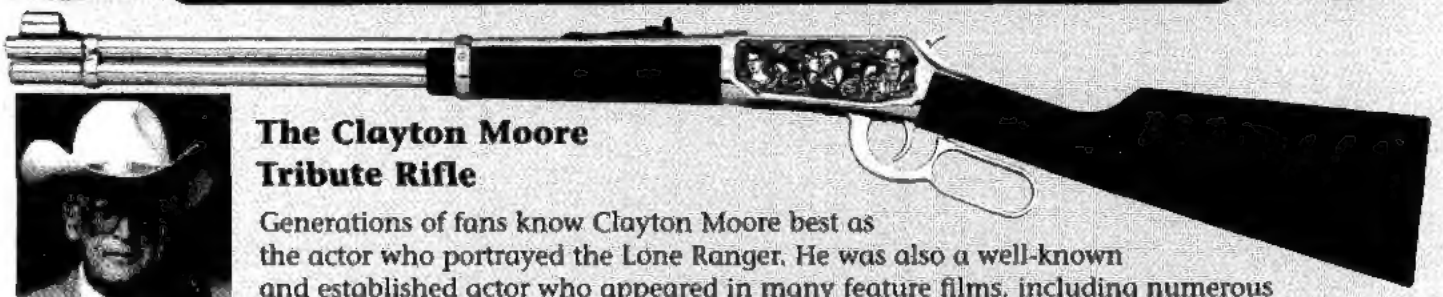
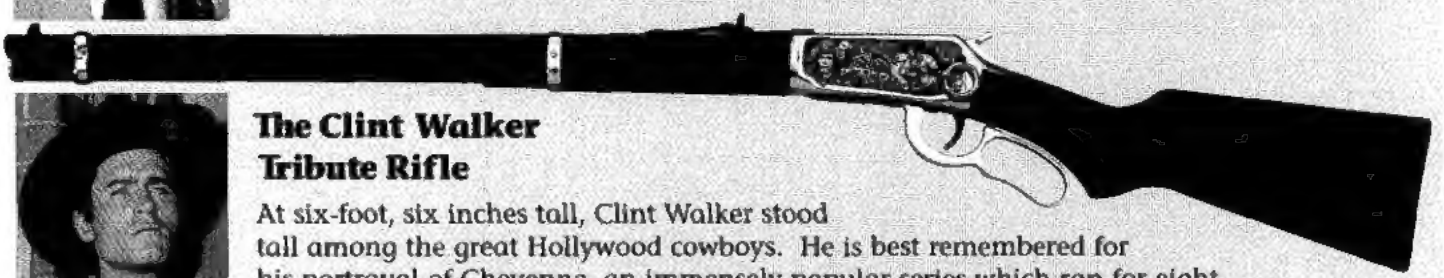


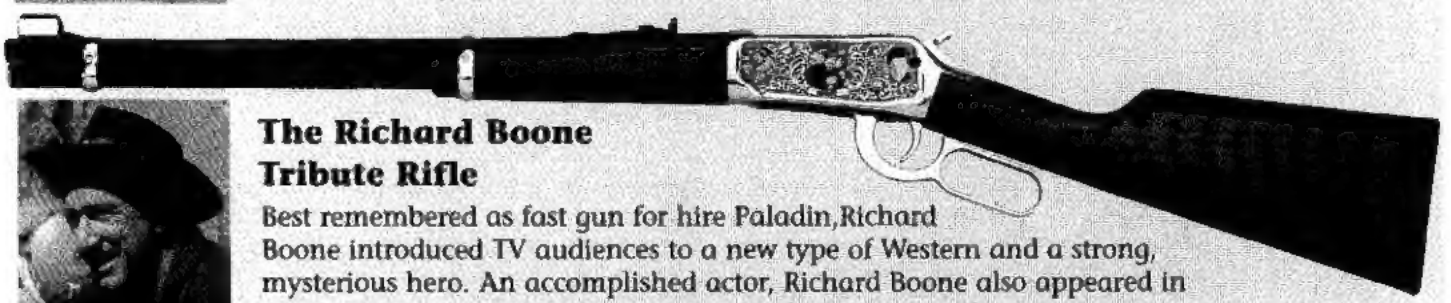
The Clayton Moore Tribute Rifle

Generations of fans know Clayton Moore best as the actor who portrayed the Lone Ranger. He was also a well-known and established actor who appeared in many feature films, including numerous Westerns, as well as the action-packed serials of the 1940's and 1950's.



The Clint Walker Tribute Rifle

At six-foot, six inches tall, Clint Walker stood tall among the great Hollywood cowboys. He is best remembered for his portrayal of Cheyenne, an immensely popular series which ran for eight years. Clint also appeared in many films, including the classic World War II film, "The Dirty Dozen."



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Best remembered as fast gun for hire Paladin,Richard Boone introduced TV audiences to a new type of Western and a strong, mysterious hero. An accomplished actor, Richard Boone also appeared in numerous movies, including many legendary Western films.

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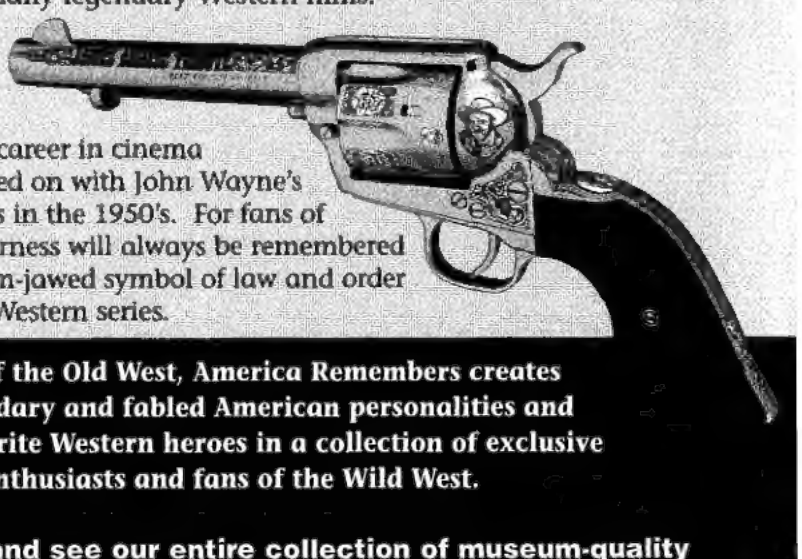

James Arness began his acting career in cinema during the late 1940's and signed on with John Wayne's company to film several movies in the 1950's. For fans of the television Western, James Arness will always be remembered as Marshal Matt Dillon, the firm-jawed symbol of law and order in television's longest running Western series.

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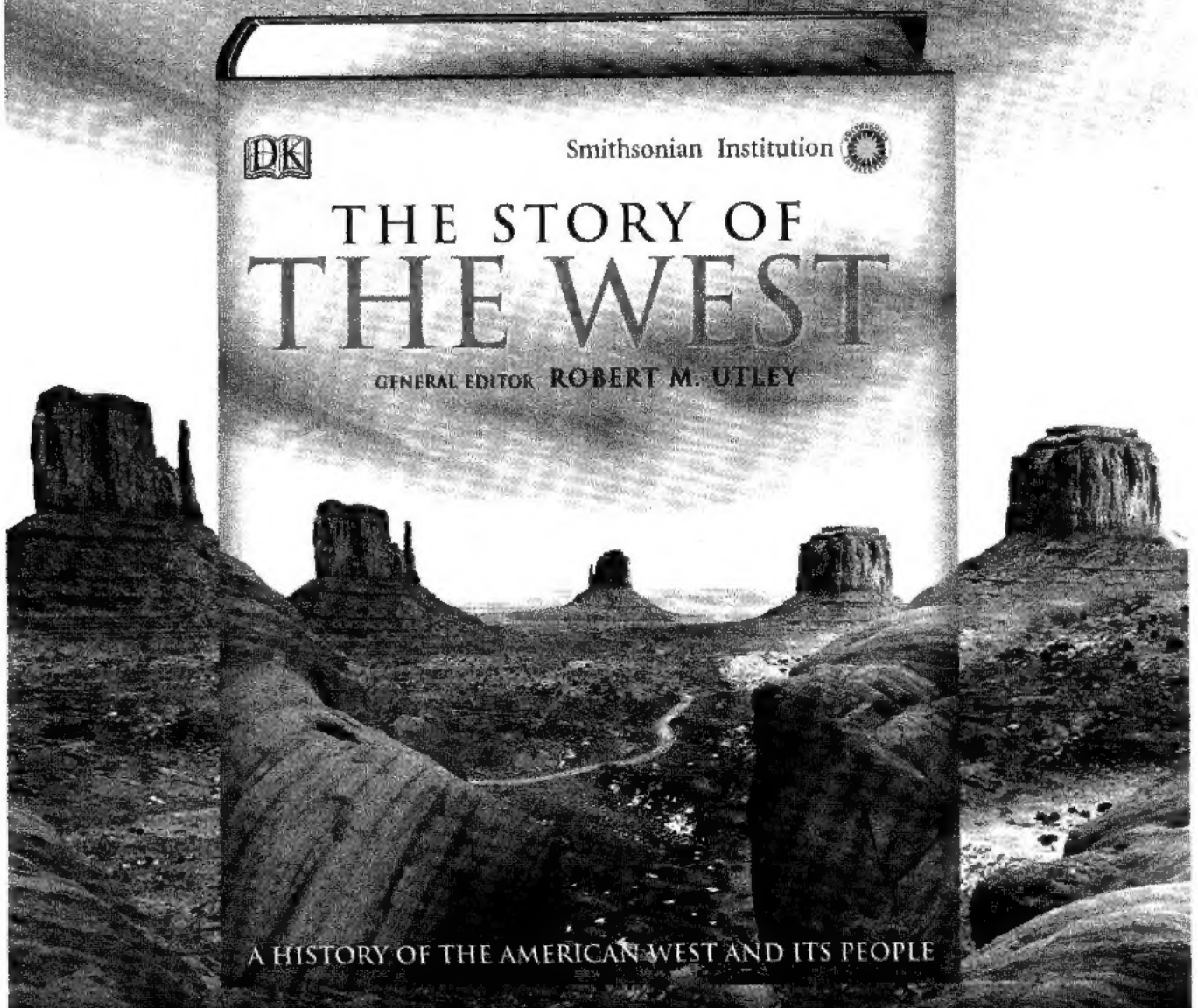

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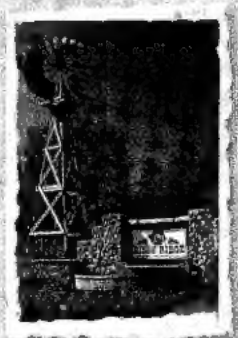

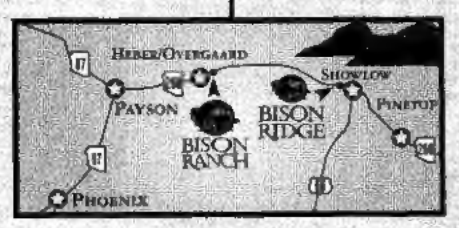

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OUR COVER

Billy Bob Thornton, trying to save the Alamo.
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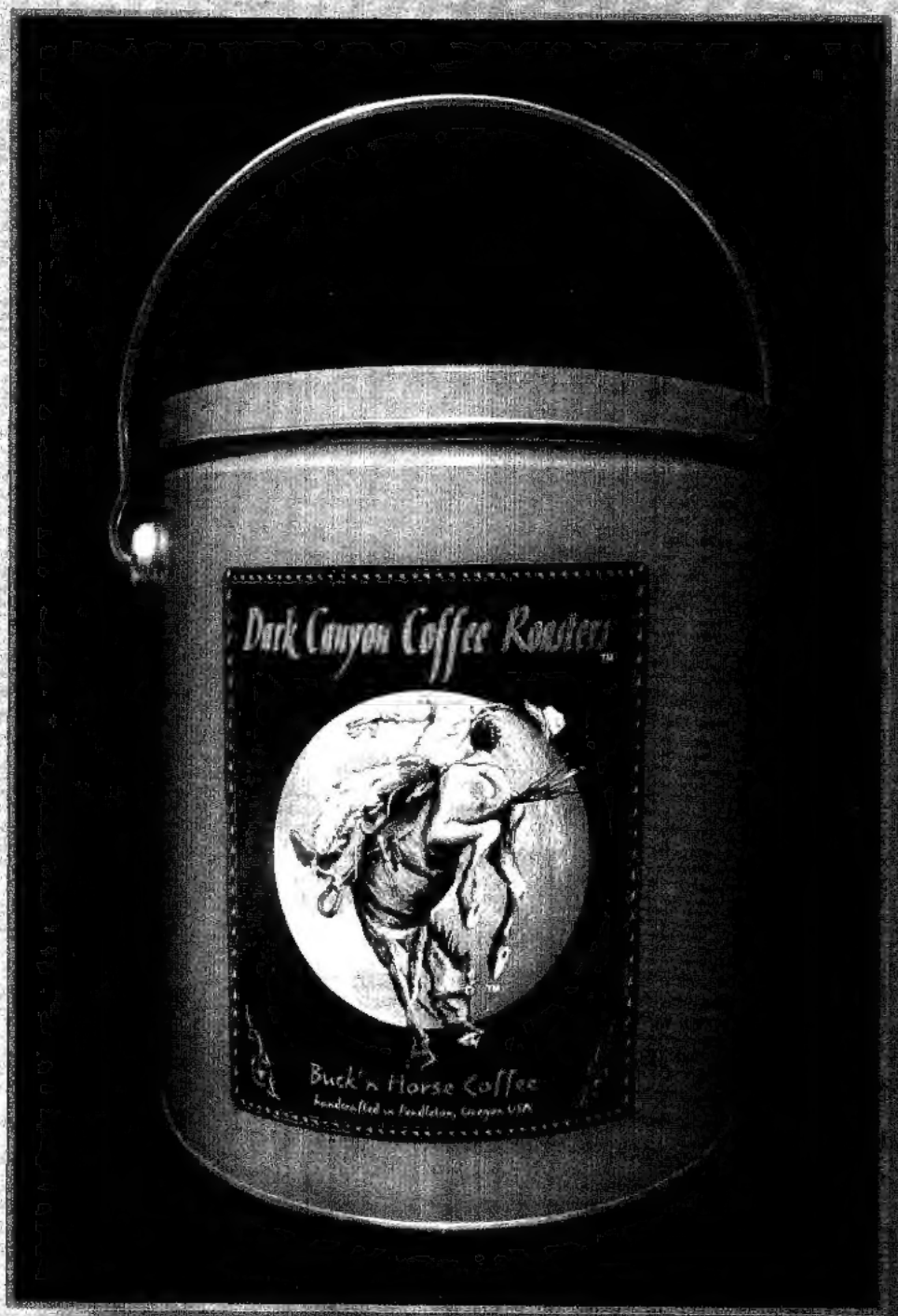

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Western Waves

Get ready for the Big One.

Surfers talk about waves coming in sets. Three little ones, a medium one, then a big one. By the looks of this issue, another big one is upon us.

We are thrilled, but let's be blunt: *True West's* family members (specifically you and I) tend to be downright obnoxious when it comes to Western movies. We hate historical errors (when we can find any history at all), and we absolutely despise made-up BS when it's so obvious (to us) the real historical facts would play so much better. The rabid among us attack Hollywood's irritating, geographic voodoo. In *The Great Northfield Raid*, the mountains of Oregon somehow end up in Minnesota, and I don't know how many times I've had to stand up in a darkened theater and yell out, *"They don't have saguaros in Monument Valley!"*

But I'm dating myself. Westerns haven't been filmed in Monument Valley in a good while (in part because it's Director **John Ford's** personal tableau, but mainly because it's too expensive).

Canada is the predominate filming location at the dawn of the new millennium, but even this trend (going where it's cheaper) is not new. Westerns have found "homes" in many incongruous places, such as Fort Wayne, New Jersey (1903), Newhall, California (1910), Durango, Mexico (1930s-60s), Kanab, Utah (1950s) and, of course, Spain and Italy (1960s) for the now classic "Spaghetti Westerns."

Here is a common refrain: "Why can't Hollywood get it right just once?" Well, the truth is, they never will—and with good reason. History is too messy. To write a successful movie (one that makes money), you need to combine characters, omit some, smooth out contradictory motives (a human staple) and gloss over warts (speaking of which, see "*True West* Comes Clean," p. 30; but I digress).

The Surfer With No Name: He dropped into town on a monster wave.

– All illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

■ In spite of itself, Hollywood has often gotten it right, at least for brief moments, and that is the genesis of our cover story "The 50 Most Historically Accurate Western Movies" (p. 39).

■ Once you get past all the hooey, we love them, or, more accurately, we love to hate 'em. **Johnny Boggs** lets loose with his 10 worst Westerns (p. 56) and although I don't agree with all of his picks, that's what makes Johnny—**The Boggsman** (sorry, just made that up).

■ **Wilbur Zink** saved our bacon on the Younger Brothers vs. the Pinkertons gunfight (p. 50). **Gus Walker** found Zink's 1969 article in our *Frontier Times* library and it was a huge help in getting that complicated story right. Also, **Duane Kyler** found us an image of a Tranter pistol and for that we owe him (and Wilbur) a car.

■ Our friend **Johnny Cash** is gone. We will miss him for his musical genius, but we will never forget him here at *True West* because he was a fan and supporter of our efforts from the get-go (see "50 Years and Counting," p. 24, and "Good-bye to Our Johnny Cash," p. 55).

Johnny was good.

An early **True West** *cartoon. Still true, 50 years later.*

– True West Archives

"I'm on the editorial staff of TRUE WEST —the costume isn't entirely authentic."

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Shooting Back

True West readers speak out

I purchased my first copy of *True West* at the PX, Mather Air Force Base in California. *True West* #1, Vol #1, Summer 1953 went for the high cost of 25 cents. As I remember, my pay at the time was approximately $100 per month. I have continued with *True West* all these years and have kept them in binders in my library.

BOB LAUGHLIN
A.K.A. DAD LONGWORTH
POWELL, WY

Bob Laughlin: A longtime True West reader.

– COURTESY BOB LAUGHLIN –

Criticizing the Critics

I am dismayed at some of the inaccuracies in the review of my book, *Wyatt Earp: A Biography of the Legend* (July 2003).

WYATT EARP

The reviewers write "we don't understand why he includes WW II photos of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower." The reviewers are apparently referring to a WW II photo of U.S. Gen. George Patton. It should have been clear that the photo was an example of how the most popular six-gun of the 1870s and '80s was still preferred by Gen. Patton.

What I take issue with the most is that the reviewers state that "anything new is buried in minutia." It should have been clear that this book was written as a reference book. The "minutia" the reviewers criticized was to give the book a deeper background than traditional biographies.

LEE SILVA
SUNSET BEACH, CA

Wyatt Earp's Halo

It was humorous to see how some people try so hard to defend the Earps (p. 39, July 2003). I am really amazed at how Wyatt Earp could have held up that big halo others put on his head.

DALENE WORTHINGTON
OMAHA, NE

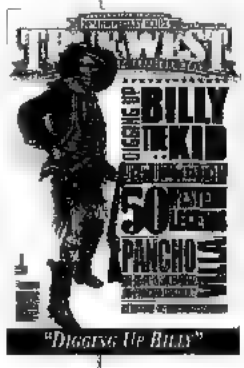
Tempestuous "Ma" Ferguson

In your "Building the American West—1901-1920" time line (Aug/Sept 2003), you discuss Ma Ferguson's gubernatorial election. Ma was actually the Texas first lady until 1917, when her husband, then Texas Gov. "Farmer Jim" Ferguson, was impeached by the legislature. Since he was ineligible to hold office, his wife ran instead and was twice elected governor, in 1924 and 1932.

WILLIAM CLARKE
WACO, TX

The Sheriff Shot Me

In your Aug/Sept 2003 issue, you said Will Carver was killed by Texas police. In point of fact, he was shot by Sheriff Lige Briant and a couple of his deputies. Carver was then taken to the Sutton County, Texas, courthouse in Sonora, where he died from loss of blood. He is buried in the Sonora cemetery with a headstone that states his date of death. The headstone appeared mysteriously; no one knows who placed it there.



"DIGGING UP BILLY"

BILL LAMB
SONORA, TEXAS

Sketching the Truth

In *Shooting from the Hip* (Aug/Sept 2003), there's a discussion of how Director Robert Wise captured a stunning shot of Garry James firing a shotgun into the camera. Included in the article was the resulting photo, along with a sketch showing how it was done.

I noticed that in both the photo and the sketch, the shooter is left-handed. However, what the camera sees is the reversed image, making a right-handed shooter appear to be left-handed. To accurately reflect the true circumstances at the time, the sketch should have shown the shooter as right-handed.

WADE MONROE
BAGGETTE, LA

Biting Our Hand

Thank you for including my *Lincoln County War* in your list of the top 50 Western books. Although it may seem like biting the hand that just fed me, I must say that in *The Vigilantes of Montana*, even the dimmest of us knows the name of the sheriff that hanged was Henry Plummer, not William Plumer.

FREDERICK NOLAN
CHALFONT, ST.GILES, ENGLAND

The copy of Vigilantes *we have gives his name as William Henry Handy Plummer. However, according to Louis Schmittroth's* The Vigilantes of Montana: 1864 Revisited, *historians have recently learned that the sheriff was born near Addison, Maine, in 1832 and christened William Henry Plumer.*

Swedish Old West Fanatic

I bought *True West* when visiting my parents in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, where there is a bookshop

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Check out our Quiz on Six-guns of the Good, the Bad and the Dangerous at www.truewestmagazine.com

that sells American magazines. I had a subscription with *Wild West*, but then I found your magazine, which had articles on Jesse James, Wild Bill and the Daltons. I found those stories more interesting and I also enjoyed the stories on Old West places you can travel to today.

BJORN A. BJORKLUND
MARIEHOLMS BRUK, SWEDEN

Western Revival?

I'd like to know if you think we're finally experiencing a Western film revival? In this past year, we have seen or will see: *Monte Walsh*, *The Johnson County War*, *The Last Cowboy*, *Hard Ground*, *Peacemakers* (TV series), *Deadwood* (series) and *The Empty Land* (currently in production).

BILL WAT
VIA THE INTERNET

Yes. If you are reading this magazine, you are experiencing it.

Corrections

Dr. Jannay Valdez (p. 50, October 2003) is the director of the Billy the Kid museum in Canton, Texas.

The Best Historic Western Hotel in Virginia City, Nevada, (p. 50, Best of the West Annual 2003) should have been the Gold Hill Hotel.

We Welcome Your Comments

"Now let the letters roll in and bare your very soul. That is what has always kept us going and I think it always will." —Joe Small, True West founder.

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NOVEMBER

Now through Nov. 16, Phoenix, AZ, **Cowboy Artists of America 38th Annual Sale & Exhibition:** This premier event features over 130 never-before-seen paintings, drawings and sculptures by members of the Cowboy Artists of America. **Information:** 602- 257-1222 or www.phxart.org

Now through July 4, 2004, Los Angeles, CA, **Glorious Treasures: 100 Years of Collecting by the Southwest Museum:** Includes objects collected since the Southwest Society's initial acquisitions in 1904. **Information:** 323-667-2000 or www.autry-museum.org

1, Hinton, OK, **Second Annual Western Oklahoma Cowboy Poetry Gathering:** A day of cowboy poetry and music. Chuck wagon cooking around noon on Saturday. Also cowboy church Sunday morning. **Information:** 405-797-3608 or www.lazybproductions.com

1-2 & 8-9, San Bernardino, CA, **Harvest Fair:** Take a trip back to the Old West. This fair has live country music, Old West shows, cowboy camps, sutlers and crafts, chuck wagon food, a mariachi band and folklorico dancers. **Information:** 909-384-5426 or www.harvestfair.net

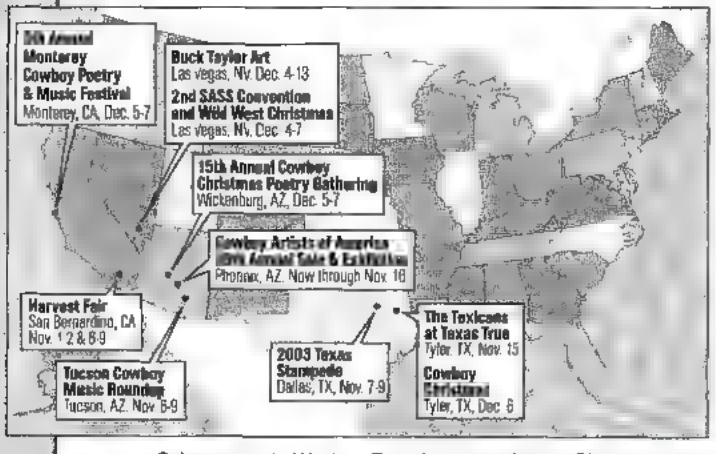
5-9, Heber City, UT, **Ninth Annual Cowboy Poetry Gathering and Buckaroo Fair:** Hosted by Waddie Mitchell other performers include Don Edwards, Baxter Black and the Bar J Wranglers. **Information:** 435-654-3666 or www.hebercitycowboypoetry.com

6-9, Tucson, AZ, **Tucson Cowboy Music Roundup:** The Home Ranch Hands Chapters Western Music Association presents four days of cowboy music, poetry, vendors, memorabilia and church. **Information:** 520-743-9328 or www.homeranchhands.org

7-9, Tombstone, AZ, **Second Annual Tombstone Western Music Festival:** Street events, vendors and evening concerts featuring Desert Sons, Belinda Gail and Curly Musgrave. **Information:** 520-457-2295, 520-457-3616 or www.tombstonewesternmusicfestival.com

7-9, Dallas, TX, **2003 Texas Stampede:** Experience the new ProRodeo Championship Finale. $500,000 in prizes. **Information:** 877-210-5425

14, Studio City, CA, **Sixth Annual Silver Spurs Awards Banquet:** The Reel Cowboys, a non-profit, charitable organization, comes together each year to honor those who make television and movie Westerns. Entertainment provided by Riders of the Purple Sage. **Information:** 626-335-1153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Monterey, CA, Dec. 5-7
Buck Taylor Art
Las vegas, Nv Dec. 4-13
2nd SASS Convention and Wild West Christmas
Las vegas, NV, Dec. 4-7
15th Annual Cowboy Christmas Poetry Gathering
Wickenburg, AZ, Dec. 5-7
Cowboy Artists of America
Phoenix, AZ. Now through Nov. 16
Harvest Fair
San Bernardino, CA
Nov. 1 2 & 8-9
Tucson Cowboy Music Roundup
Tucson, AZ. Nov. 6-9
2003 Texas Stampede
Dallas, TX, Nov. 7-9
The Texicans at Texas True
Tyler, TX, Nov. 15
Cowboy Christmas
Tyler, TX, Dec. 6

Submissions to Western Roundup are welcome. Please send all information and photos at least three months in advance to Western Roundup, P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327, info@truewestmagazine.com or fax it to 480-575-1903.

DECEMBER 5-7
Monterey, California
Fifth Annual Monterey Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival
Plenty of music and dancing accompanies this Western art and gear show. Includes a lecture on artist Maynard Dixon and cowboy church. Entertainers include Sons of the San Joaquin, Riders in the Sky and Baxter Black. **Information:** 800-722-9652 or www.montereycowboy.com

Riders in the Sky (above) will entertain at the festival this year.
– Courtesy Monterey Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival –

15, Tyler, TX, **The Texicans at Texas True:** Real cowboy re-enactments. **Information:** 903-561-4793

15- Nov. 1, 2004, Golden, CO, **Boot Hill: Cowboy Boots on Lookout Mountain:** This Buffalo Bill Museum exhibit explores the evolution of the cowboy boot from work shoe to fashion statement. **Information:** 303-526-0744 or www.buffalobill.org

15-16, Phoenix, AZ, **Second Annual Heard Museum Spanish Market:** Arts and crafts from more than 70 New Mexico and Arizona artists transform the museum into an outdoor marketplace. **Information:** 602-252-8848 or www.heard.org/spanishmarket.php

20-23, Scottsdale, AZ, **Cowboy Mounted Shooting World Championships:** The COLT Eliminator Finale on Saturday has the top 10 cowboys and cowgirls going for broke. Also, costumes, shopping, artists, a chili cook-off and a new Civil War event featuring authentic uniforms. **Information:** 480-471-0485 or www.cowboymountedshooting.com

28-30, Phoenix, AZ, **A Celebration of the Art of Maynard Dixon:** The Arizona Biltmore presents works by one of America's most respected and influential Western artists. **Information:** 602-955-6600 or www.arizonabiltmore.com

29, Minden, NE, **Christmas Parade:** A lighted parade around the Harold Warp Pioneer Village Courthouse Square, the "Light of the World" Christmas Pageant and the lighting of over 10,000 lights around the square. **Information:** 800-445-4447 or www.pioneervillage.org

DECEMBER

4-7, Las Vegas, NV, **Second SASS Convention and Wild West Christmas:** This Single Action Shooting Society event features seminars, guest speakers and entertainment. **Information:** 877-411-SASS or www.sassnet.com

4-13, Las Vegas, NV, **Buck Taylor Art:** An art exhibit by Western actor and painter Buck Taylor at the National Finals Rodeo. **Information:** 504-328-7844 or www.bucktaylor.com

5-7, Wickenburg, AZ, **15th Annual Cowboy Christmas Poetry Gathering:** Cowboy poems and Western songs. **Information:** 928-684-5479 or www.wickenburgchamber.com

6, Tyler, TX, **Cowboy Christmas:** Celebrate the holidays with live country and cowboy music. Sip hot chocolate or wassail as you do your cowboy Christmas shopping. **Information:** 903-561-4793

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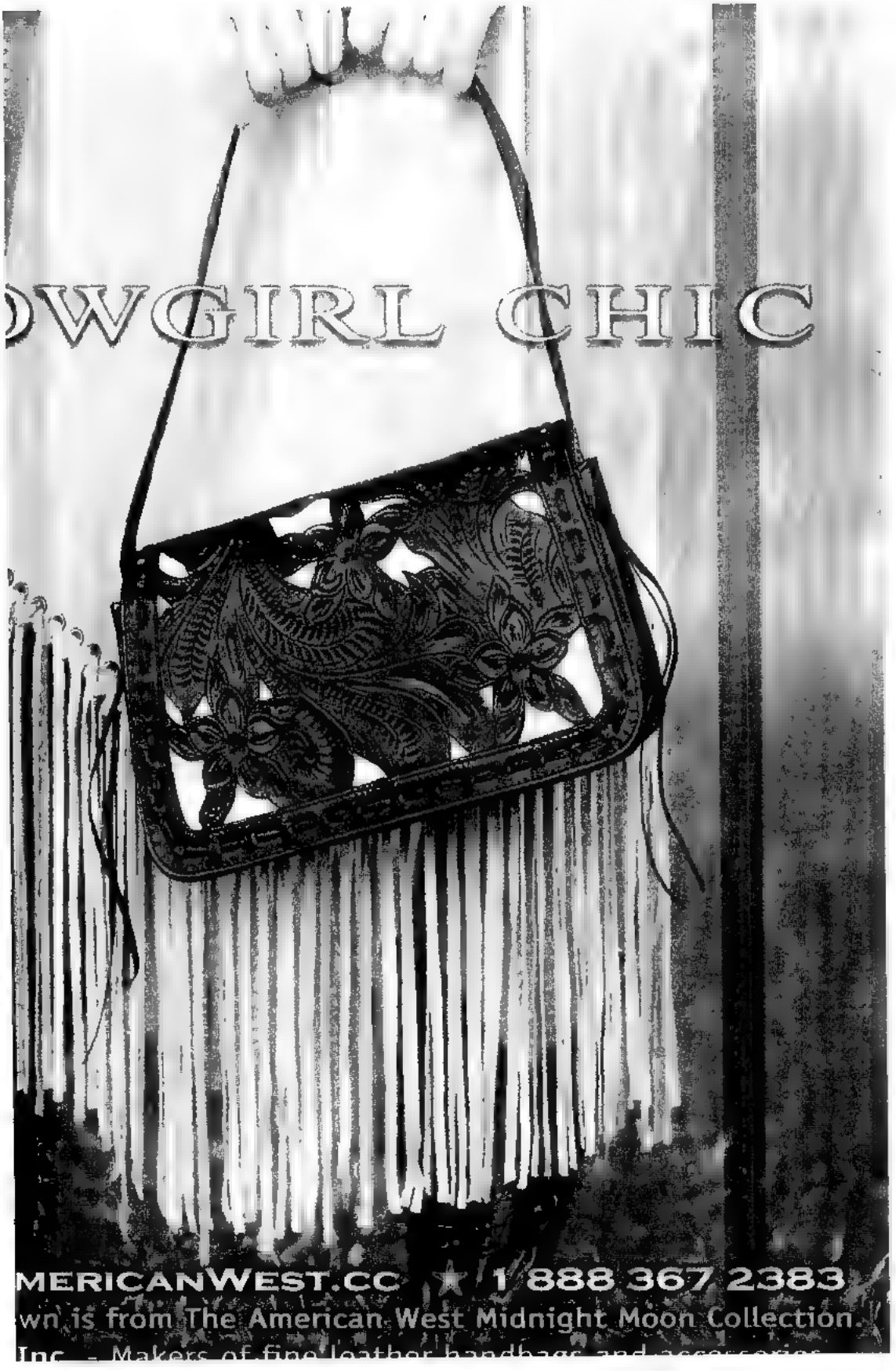
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BY MEGHAN SAAR

Collecting Old West Photographs

Brian Lebel's 14th Annual Cody Old West Show & Auction.

A picture of the Old Faithful Geyser from Yellowstone National Park may not have the appeal of Buffalo Bill, but the photographer who took it certainly did, in his own way. In 1884, Frank Jay Haynes became the first official photographer for Yellowstone National Park. This photo's negative is signed and dated July 1884, making it one of the first taken during Haynes' 30-year career at Yellowstone, $2,100.

"A photograph is usually looked at, seldom looked into," said Ansel Adams, a noted concert-pianist-turned-photographer. Buffalo Bill Cody and Yellowstone National Park's Old Faithful Geyser are familiar photographic subjects and interesting to look at, but important factors in determining a photograph's value is the story behind the picture and the photographer who captured the subject on film. The condition of the photo also contributes to its collectible status, but a fine picture without any history to speak of doesn't do much for anyone in the end. Except, perhaps, look pretty.

At Brian Lebel's 14th Annual Cody Old West Show & Auction on June 26-28, over 20 individual, Old West photographic images were sold, collectively hammering in at nearly $50,000. *True West* publisher and photography expert Robert G. McCubbin says that in order for a photo to be fully accepted it needs either to have contemporary identification on the photograph itself or, at best, logical provenance. One of the top-selling images at the Cody auction did not have either, but most of the other photographs met collectors' criteria.

NOTABLE OLD WEST PHOTO LOTS INCLUDED

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY CODY OLD WEST SHOW & AUCTION)

Frank A. Rinehart was the official photographer for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition and International Exposition, which was held in Omaha, Nebraska, June-October 1898. Contracted to take photographs of over 500 Indian delegates during the last week of the Expo's Indian Congress, Rinehart and his assistant Adolph Muhr (who would later collaborate with Edward S. Curtis on his Native American prints) made over 500 glass-plate negatives and almost 1,200 platinum prints. Their most famous subject was Apache chief Geronimo. The negative to the image (right) is signed and dated 1898; $4,100.

Although this Belle Starr tintype didn't beat out the Edward S. Curtis print "The Rush Gatherer Kutenai" (sold for $8,000), the Starr tintype was the second-highest photograph sold at the auction. Brian Lebel was upfront about the image's unknown provenance, but Robert G. McCubbin says that based on known pictures of Starr, he does not think the photograph is of her. McCubbin adds that all photos are genuine antiques, but identifying an individual subject in a photo is judgmental, which is why provenance or contemporary identification are needed for full authentication; $7,000.

A young Martha Jane Canary, better known as Calamity Jane, holds her rifle at her side in this 1880 cabinet card. The catalog picture may look weak, but that is exactly why you examine the photograph yourself, McCubbin says. His personal examination of the photo convinced him it is an authentic cabinet card. This image of Calamity is rare, as it is not known to exist in another original cabinet card; $3,750.

Before David F. Barry photographed Buffalo Bill and members of his Wild West Show, he already had a reputation due to trips he had taken in his portable photographic studio in the late 1870s: Sitting Bull and George A. Custer were among his subjects. When Barry took this photo of Buffalo Bill, the old showman was embarking on one of his farewell tours with his Wild West entourage. The photographer's annotation on the reverse reads: "Col's Farewell Salute"; $4,000.

Upcoming Auctions

Nov 9-10
Major Firearms Auction
Little John's Auction Service
www.littlejohnsauctionservice.com

Dec 7-8
Estate Arms Collections
Greg Martin Auctions
www.gmartin-auctions.com

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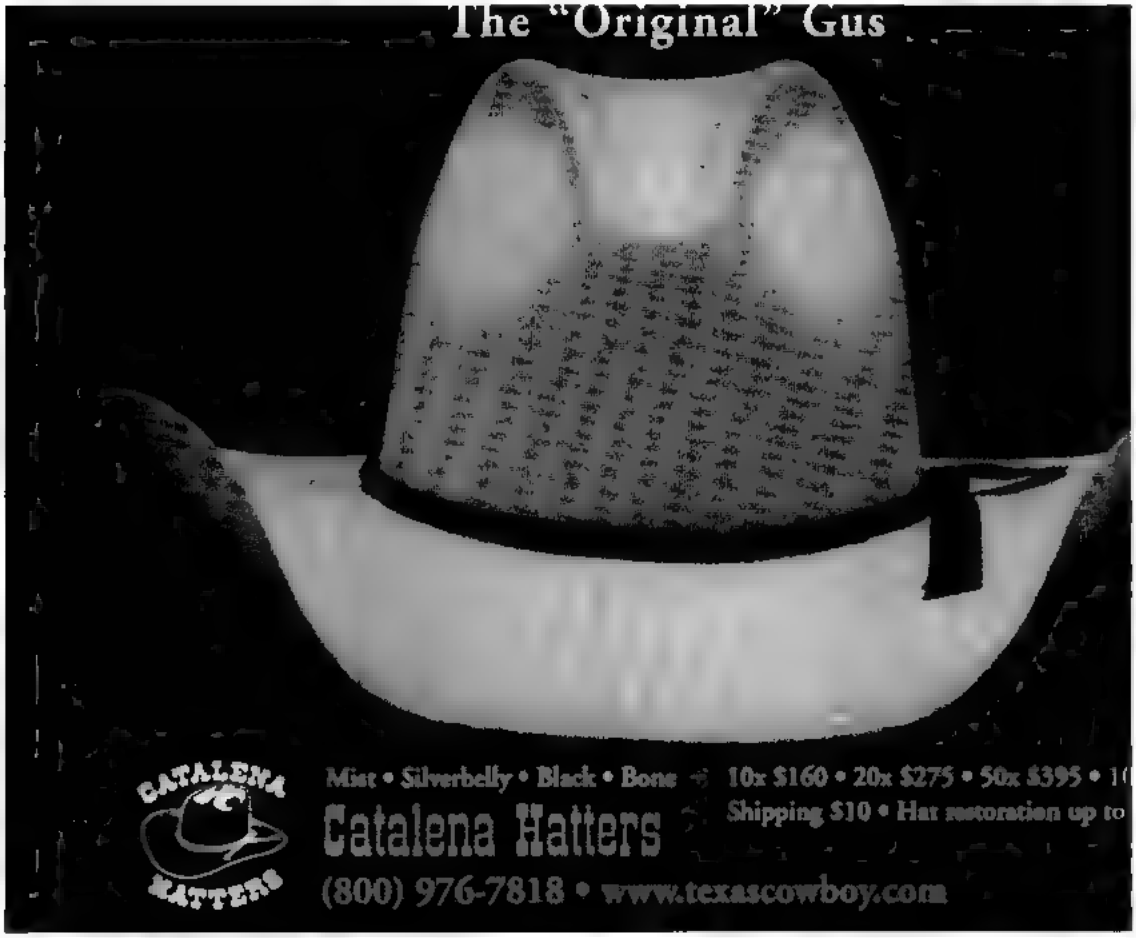
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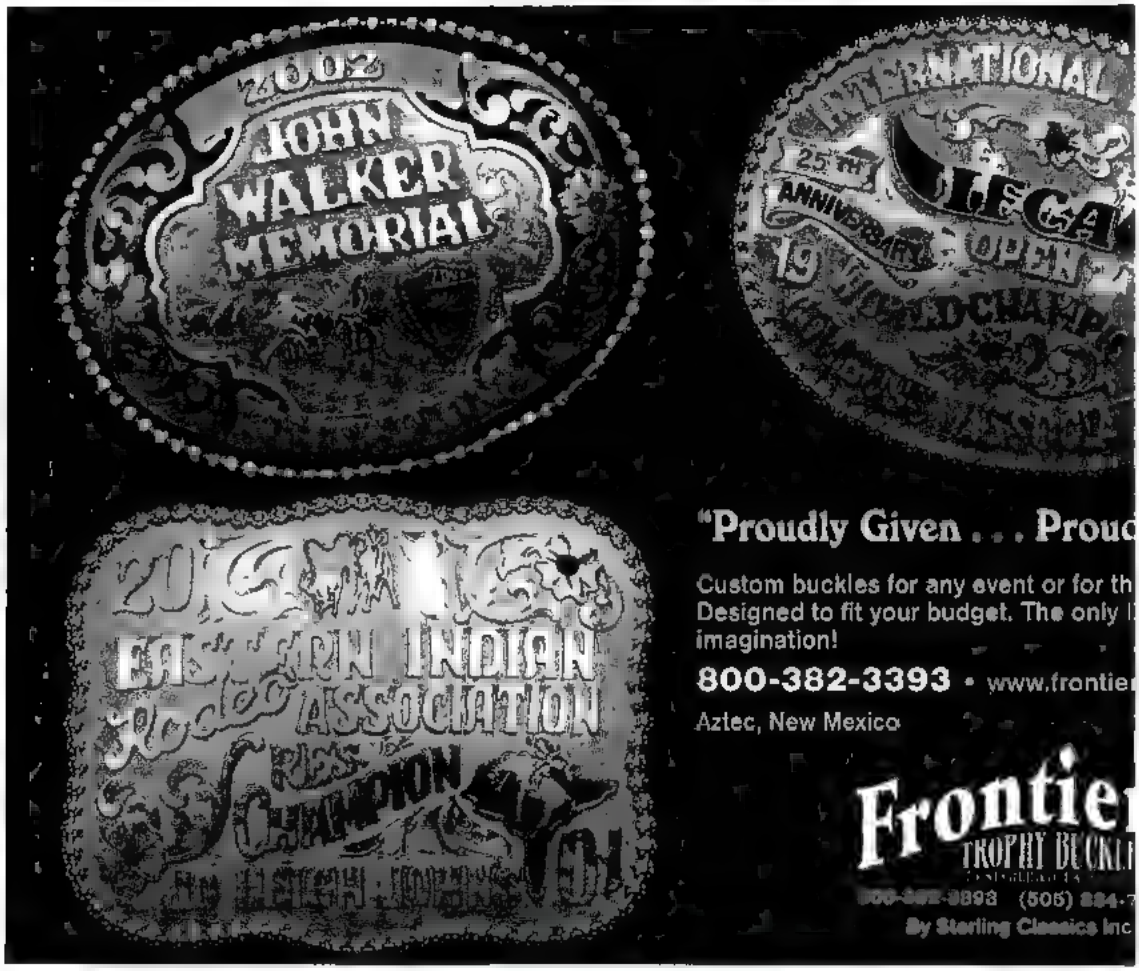
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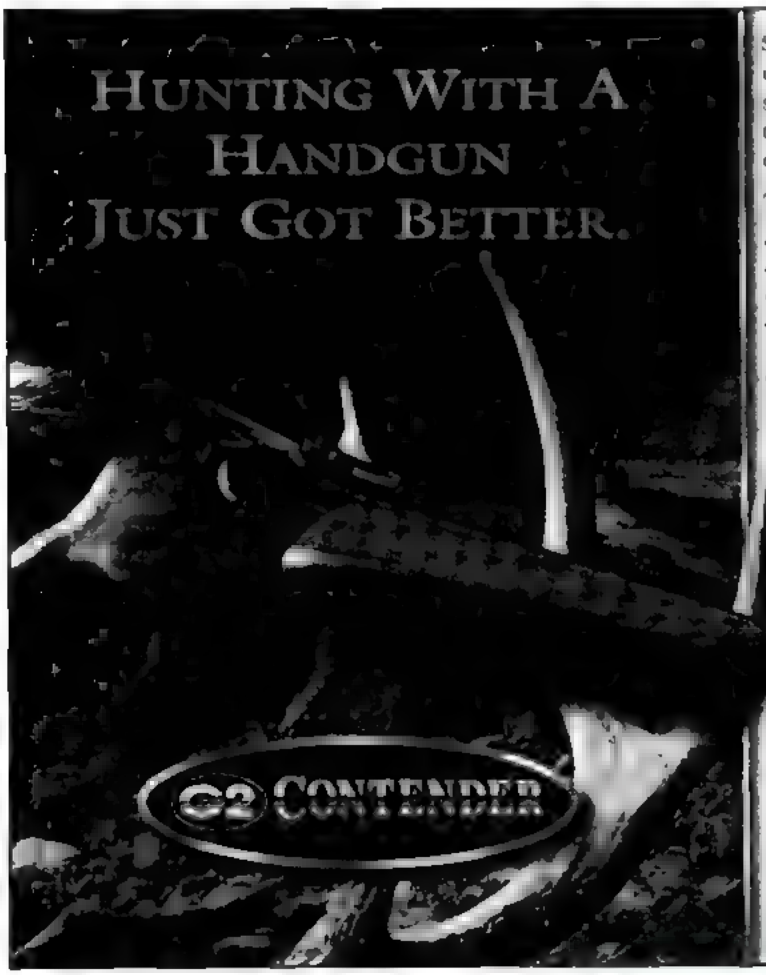

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BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

Hollywood Takes Aim

Are movies historically accurate with guns?

Movies often play around with the facts, but some of us who enjoy historical films expect such works to be believable: by using the right props and by telling a truthful tale. Firearms are often an important part of a story and can add flavor to each actor's character. Here are a few motion pictures where the leading players' guns take on a subtle importance to the script, and here's how Hollywood chose to showcase these guns . . . historically correct or not.

The Grey Fox—an authentic touch

Actor Richard Farnsworth once told me that while portraying the real-life outlaw Bill Miner for *The Grey Fox*, he used a Colt Bisley Single Action revolver—as did Miner

During the scene where Miner purchases his Bisley, the museum in Kamloops, Canada (where the film was made), allowed the production company to borrow Bill Miner's 5½-inch barrel, .41 caliber Colt Bisley six-gun. The original was only handled during that one scene; for the rest of the film, a look-alike Bisley was employed. Nice touch.

During one scene in the poignant Canadian film,* The Grey Fox, *actor Richard Farnsworth (playing the real-life outlaw Bill Miner) handled Miner's original Colt Bisley revolver.

One detail that slipped past most gun buffs is that while Steve McQueen (playing Tom Horn) relied on the 1876 Winchester rifle (right) in his close-ups, lightweight, easier to handle '73 Winchesters were used for shots on a galloping horse.

ALL PHOTOS TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

Tom Horn—a slick gun switch

In the 1980 Western *Tom Horn*, star Steve McQueen relied on an 1876 Winchester for his depiction of manhunter Tom Horn. Several '76 "Centennial Models" were refinished for the film in order to make them appear near new, as they would have looked in 1901-03, when the story takes place.

Because the '76 Winchester is so big, Model 1873 Winchester rifles were used for the horseback-running long shots. Now, that's one detail that got by a lot of us gun enthusiasts.

T.R. packs a Peacemaker?

John Milius' TNT movie *The Rough Riders* had Tom Berenger (playing Lt. Col. Teddy Roosevelt) packing a replica of Roosevelt's famed L.D. Nimschke-engraved, ivory stocked, 7½-inch, .44-40 Colt Peacemaker up the slopes of San Juan Hill in 1898. Roosevelt carried this model gun during his South Dakota ranching days in the 1880s. (The Peacemaker had a buffalo head on one side of the grips and an entwined "TR" monogram on the other.)

Although this is a great looking six-shooter for our "cowboy president," it's not the gun Teddy used during the Spanish-American War. During that conflict, he carried a government-issue, .38 caliber New Army and Navy Model Double Action Colt revolver with plain, hard rubber grips. The gun was salvaged from the battleship *U.S.S. Maine* after it sank in Havana Harbor. The revolver was given to Roosevelt shortly before he departed for Cuba with his Rough Riders. Perhaps that gun wasn't as fancy as his cowboy Colt, but it certainly was more symbolic . . . at least T.R. thought so.

Phil

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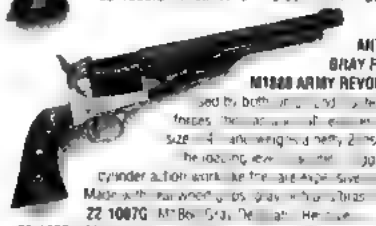

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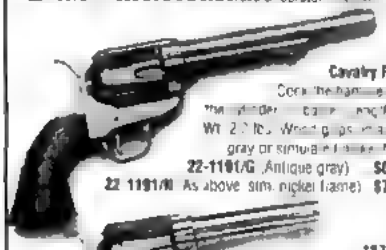
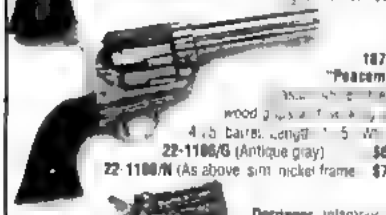
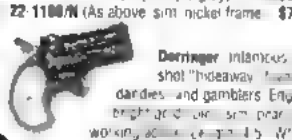
22-1007G M1860 Gray Deluxe Revolver **$67**
22-1007L M1860 Deluxe Blued, Brass Decorator Revolver **$72**



1873 Cavalry Pistol
Copies the handgun used in the famous Battle of the Little Bighorn. Wt 2 lbs. Wood grips, antique gray or simulated nickel frame.
22-1191/G (Antique gray) **$67 PPD**
22-1191/N (As above, sim. nickel frame) **$72 PPD**



1873 "Peacemaker"
Walnut-finished hardwood grips, antique gray finish. 4¾" barrel length. Wt 2 lbs.
22-1186/G (Antique gray) **$86 PPD**
22-1186/N (As above, sim. nickel frame) **$72 PPD**



Derringer Infamous twin shot "hideaway" pistol of cardsharps and gamblers. Engraved bright gold color sim. pearl grips, working action. Lgth 4.5". Wt 12 oz.
22-1263 (Decorator Derringer) **$39 PPD**

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14-213 (Deluxe Marshal Dodge City) **$19 PPD**
14-214 (Deluxe Sheriff) **$19 PPD**
29-714 (Old West Jailer's Keys, 5 on ring) **$18 PPD**

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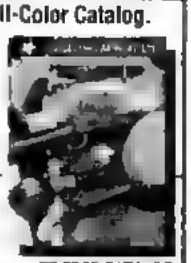

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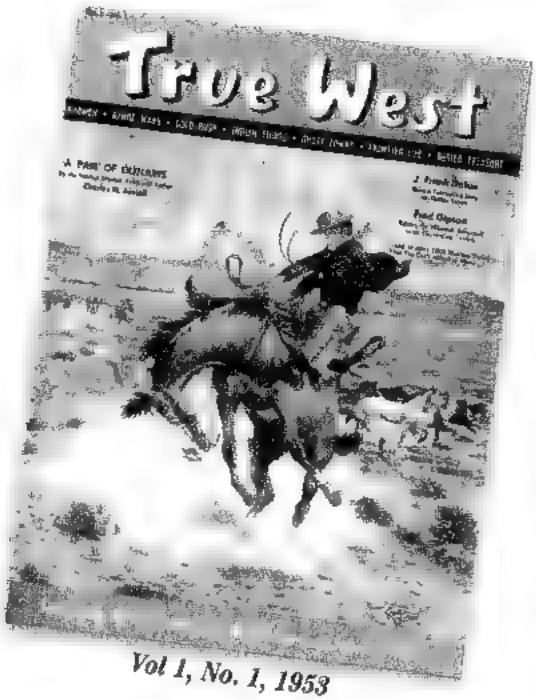
BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

50 Years and Counting

THE HISTORY OF *TRUE WEST* MAGAZINE

It started haphazardly, as so many good things do. Joe Small was publishing *Western Sportsman* and noticed that every time he ran an article on outlaws, the letters poured in. What if he devoted a magazine to the Old West? In April 1953, *True West* magazine was born and the rest is history.

Let's take a look at the story of this proud magazine. And what better way to start than by looking at 50 years of covers. Boy Howdy! Did we ever jump around.



Vol 1, No. 1, 1953

Spring 1954

May/June 1955

Jan/Feb 1956

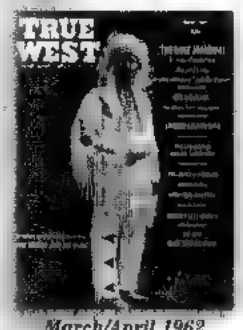
November 1957

Nov/Dec 1958

Sept/Oct 1959

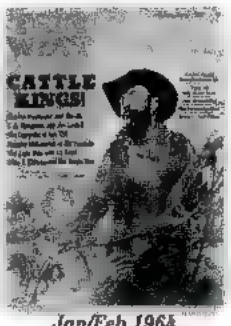
Jan/Feb 1960

Nov/Dec 1961



March/April 1962

July/Aug 1963



Jan/Feb 1964

July/Aug1965

Sept/Oct 1966

July/Aug 1967

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TRUE WEST
TRUE WEST
TRUE WEST

Howdy, Pard!
Sure, let's go West... but, let's go TRUE WEST!
Shipping now, scheduled for release in your territory May 1st, or upon receipt, is TRUE WEST Magazine, first issue Summer, ...a regularly issued publication...16-20-25¢.
Here for the first time are the real...true... authoritative stories about the West, written and published in the West!
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A PAIR OF OUTLAWS
J. Frank Dobie
Fred Gipson

Promotional poster touts the first issue of True West.

– True West Archives –

It seems appropriate that the man who created this magazine 50 years ago and the man who's now in charge both had the same motivation: the Old West excited them since they were boys.

True West founder Joe Austell Small fantasized about creating a magazine devoted to the West from the time he was 14 and earned his first $19 with a freelance story. In 1953, with a $9,000 nest egg he'd saved with his wife Elizabeth, they transformed their master bedroom in their home in Austin, Texas, into a magazine office, and decided to find out if stories about the Old West would excite readers.

It worked so well that years later, a nine-year-old boy waiting for his mother at the Desert Drugs in Kingman, Arizona, would pick up an early copy of *True West* and get hooked on everything about the West. Bob Boze Bell, who bought the magazine with his partners four years ago, remembers, "I just loved it—I read every word. I always dreamed of being a part of it."

And so the road may have been long and windy and rocky

BUILDING THE AMERICAN WEST

Navajos register for the WW II draft.

March 11, 1941
Lend-Lease Act becomes law, allowing the U. S. to provide military aid to Great Britain, whose defense was vita. to the U.S.

July 26, 1941
After the Japanese Army pushes into Indochina, President Franklin D. Roosevelt freezes all Japanese assets in the U.S.

December 7, 1941
At 7:55 a.m., Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor. U.S. declares war on Japan the following day. During WW II over 44,000 Native Americans will serve in the armed forces, including the Navajo Marine code talkers.

U.S.S. Shaw blows up in Pearl Harbor attack.

Feb. 19, 1942
President Roosevelt issues an executive order, forcing about 120,000 Japanese-Americans into detention camps. During WW II, about 33,000 Japanese-Americans serve in the U.S. military.

U.S.S. Yorktown under atte during the Battle of Midw

over these past five decades, but these bookends to its history say a lot about what this magazine has been and what it will always be.

Taking a big risk

First, let's start with a confession: "There would never have been a . . . *True West* if I had known as much about that [publishing] business as I know now."—Joe "Hosstail" Small, recounting the history of the magazine at its 30th birthday in 1983.

Yes, the publishing business is one chancy way to make a living, and Joe Small did it as he was trying to raise a family. His first publishing venture was buying an existing magazine in 1947, *Western Sportsman*. Each month, amid stories on hunting and fishing, he'd include one "Bad Man" article on an outlaw or hombre of Western days. Soon, Small found that he got the most mail from that feature, and in 1953, *True West* was born to satisfy that thirst.

"No magazine ever published before will compare in authenticity . . . power . . . and true western feeling," he boasted in a flyer advertising the new quarterly magazine. It sold for 25 cents, and its first cover touted stories on "Badmen, range wars, gold rush, Indian fights, ghost towns, frontier life, buried treasure."

"We couldn't come out with an issue until I sold enough advertising to pay for it plus enough extra profit to keep us in groceries and pay other necessary expenses," Small remembered. He always loved those moments when an unexpected ad would arrive to save the day and his family would rejoice with the chant, "Daddy pulled another issue out of the fire."

Even though the magazine earned rave reviews and many "goody goody" letters (although it was letters of criticism that Small insisted get published), Small ran out of money by the third issue. But his vendors believed in him and offered credit so the magazine could continue. Small made important changes—cutting the number of pages and the slick paper and four-color printing that had eaten up so much money—and held on. "Starting *True West* was one of the most exciting things that ever happened to me," he'd always insist.

The founder of True West, *Joe Small (above, left), got the idea to start the Western history magazine while he was publishing* Western Sportsman *(above, right).*

– True West Archives –

The family struggled, putting out two magazines that both needed attention. "It became increasingly hard to pull each issue of *Western Sportsman* out of the fire from an advertising standpoint," Small remembered, "and take care of the growing pain of *True West* at that time." So while it felt like "selling one of my own kids," he sold off *Western Sportsman* in 1957. That allowed the Smalls to "respond to readers' requests for *True West* on a monthly basis."

But at the same time, he bought *Frontier Times*—founded in 1923 by J. Marvin Hunter, who Small called "a pioneer of true-type western journalism and a real historian." Small bought the magazine and devised an ingenious plan—for several years, he alternated it monthly with *True West*, thereby allowing both to stay on the newsstands for two months at a time, increasing their sales.

While he still wasn't "hauling our profits to the bank," but just getting by, Small was publishing magazines that were being lauded by history students and university professors alike. One night at a party, he overheard this statement: "*True West* is bringing more Old West history to life than all the rest of the press combined, including all of the history books!" That the statement came from Dr. Walter Prescott Webb, then the president of the American

1941–1953

June 4-7, 1942
U.S. Navy defeats Japanese task force in the Battle of Midway.

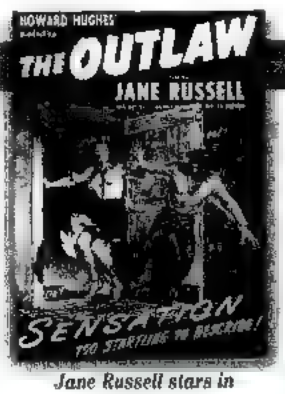
August 7-9, 1942
U.S. Marines invade Guadalcanal.

December 2, 1942
Enrico Fermi achieves the world's first nuclear chain reaction at the University of Chicago.

1943
Howard Hughes shows off Jane Russell's assets in *The Outlaw*

March 31, 1943
Musical *Oklahoma!* opens at the St. James Theatre on Broadway to rave reviews.

July 1, 1943
Paycheck deduction of income taxes begins.



Jane Russell stars in The Outlaw.

September 3, 1943
U.S. and British forces invade Italy.

June 6, 1944
Allied forces launch the D-Day invasion at Normandy, France.

February 4-11, 1945
America, Britain and USSR agree to the partition of Europe during the Yalta Conference in the Crimea, setting the stage for the Cold War

April 12, 1945
President Roosevelt dies.

May 7, 1945
Germany surrenders.

July 16, 1945
World's first atomic bomb is detonated at Trinity site, about 90 miles northwest of Alamogordo, New Mexico.

August 6, 1945
A-bomb (nicknamed Little Boy) kills

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION

Historical Association, was an incredible boost. (Webb obviously adored *True West*, for he served as an honorary member of the staff—one of the most significant imprints of prestige the magazine had in those early days.)

"Then almost as if overnight, the money started pouring in," reported Small, in his eight-part history. "I thought it was some kind of fluke and would last only a few days, but when it continued week after week I started wondering what on earth was happening." When he went to his friend and historian Webb and asked about it, he was told a two-word answer for his new success: "accumulative effort." "In short, what I had done, painfully step by step throughout the years had finally come to roost," Small was able to say.

In the early 1960s, the money-making magazine was able to finance fancy new offices with a water view. Country singer Johnny Cash came to visit and Small grubbed up some Texas chili and they had quite a party. Johnny went on to record a *True West* album about 1966, a "good collector's item," Small would call the two-record set.

The success went on year after year, feeding Small's wanderlust for even more magazines. "I actually got up to 11 titles and that is quite a job for any publisher," he'd eventually say.

In the 1960s, *True West* was the largest Western magazine on the market, with several hundred thousand copies sold monthly at newsstands. But the recession of 1973 was like a kick in the head and the magazine started going downhill.

In 1979, Small sold *True West* to Chet Krause of Iola, Wisconsin—"the only person who didn't want to take the bridle strings in his own hands, bog his spurs and head out across the hill." (In non-publisher speak, that means Chet respected what Small had done and wanted to continue in the same vein.)

Small stayed on as publisher and Krause called himself the assistant publisher. They both were on hand as *True West* celebrated its 30th birthday with a big shindig that concluded the 10th annual rendezvous of the National Association for Outlaw and Lawman History in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Krause ended up publishing several magazines, eventually complaining that they'd all "turned to gold except *True West*." By 1983, newsstand sales were so dismal, the owners considered pulling the magazine off the newsstands altogether, according to a history published several years ago.

In 1984, *True West* was sold again, and in "four huge truckloads of files, equipment and back issues," moved to Perkins, Oklahoma. A consortium now owned it and Bob Evans was the publisher. He was soon bought out by his silent partners, who moved the magazine to Stillwater, Oklahoma.

The "two Steves" were now in charge, Steve Gragert and Steve Cundiff.

They soon discovered that readers "liked it the way it was" and objected to any changes in what, for many, had become an institution. "Readers felt like they owned a piece of the rock, and any deviation in style or presentation brought a response," Gragert remembers. But he also recalls how much fun it was to get to know the writers and subscribers.

He had originally come to the magazine (with a background as a history professor) in the advertising department; then he became the publisher and jumped at a chance to own part of the magazine when the offer finally came. "Not that it was a great money opportunity, but I felt it was right as a part of history," he says.

Although he's never told anyone before, he admits that it was "time to move on" when Bob Boze Bell showed up on his doorstep, wondering about fulfilling a childhood dream of owning *True West*. "I must admit I had a growing difficulty in dealing with the violence presented in the magazine," Gragert says. "The need to continually bring forward outlawry and weaponry was not my bag."

He said he was glad to see Bell and his partners buy it and is happy with what they've done. "They made it what it should be. Congratulations on the changes they've made, while keeping the tradition of bringing to the public the history of the West," he says. (Gragert edits the papers of Will Rogers and is now working on Vol. 4.)

Bob Bell and his friend Robert G. McCubbin started dreaming about a magazine while they were visiting Tombstone, Arizona, and word quickly got back to *True West* that they were interested in buying the magazine that had ignited Bell's lifelong interest in the West.

BUILDING THE AMERICAN WEST

between 70,000-130,000 Japanese in Hiroshima. Three days later, another A-bomb (Fat Man) kills 45,000 more at Nagasaki.

September 2, 1945
Japan surrenders, ending WW II.

1947
Denim manufacturer Blue Bell hires Rodeo Ben to design a zippered cowboy-cut jean designated 13MWZ, which is eventually named "The Wrangler."

1948
The Arizona Supreme Court grants Indians the right to vote. Director John Ford releases his masterpiece, *Fort Apache*, starring John Wayne and Henry Fonda. John Wayne's performance in *Red River*, directed by Howard Hawks, prompts John Ford to say, "I didn't know the son-of-a-bitch could act!"

June 26, 1948
Operation Vittles begins as U.S. and Great Britain launch the Berlin airlift.

John Wayne (center) stars in John Ford's Fort Apache.

August 24, 1949
U.S. and its allies establish NATO.

1950
Congressional Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy plays one of his first starring roles in the B-Western *The Kid from Texas*.

June 25, 1950
North Korea invades South Korea, starting the Korean War.

June 27, 1950
President Truman sends 35 military advisers to aid the French in South Vietnam.

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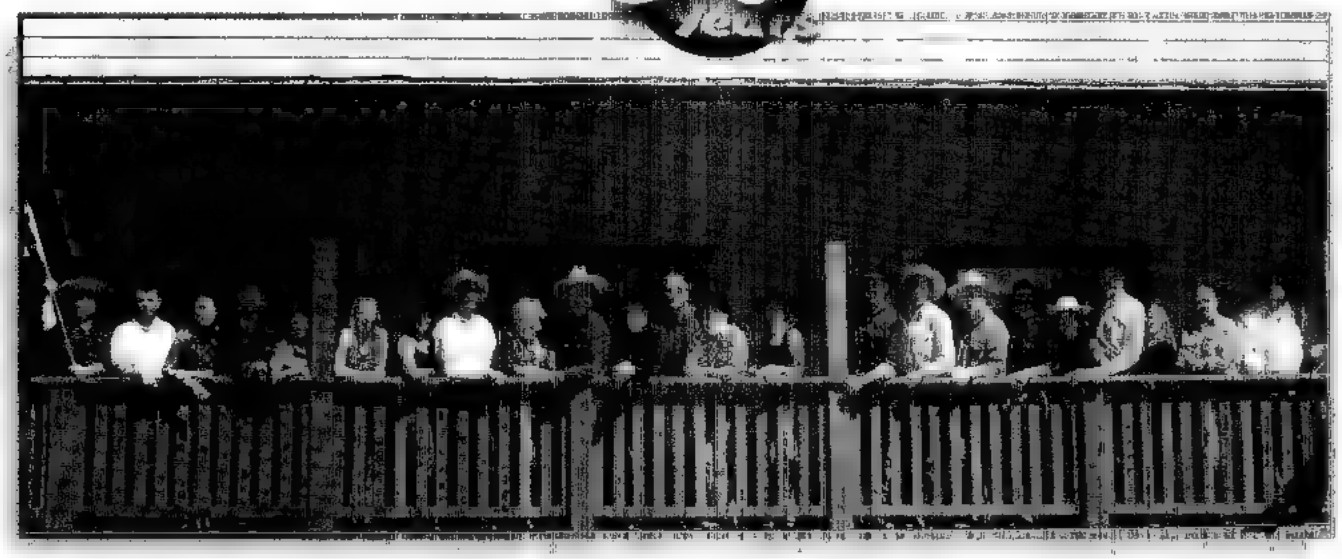


The 2003 True West *staff (from left): Robert Ray, Jason Benefield, Abby Pearson, Samantha Somers, Sue Lambert, Meghan Saar, Doreen Daiss, Dave Daiss, Jana Bommersbach, Bob Boze Bell, Marshall Trimble, Dan Harshberger, Gus Walker, Trish Brink, Ted Gàcsi, John Beckett, Larry Johns, Bob Brink, Karen Robertson, R.G. Robertson, Carole Compton Glenn, "Bear," Robert G. McCubbin and Mike Melrose (not shown, Jerry Joslyn).*

– By John Beckett –

Then editor Marcus Huff called to say, if you're serious, the Steves would entertain an offer.

"Two independent accountants told us there's no business there and we shouldn't buy it," Bell remembers. "Of course, we didn't listen."

The deal closed in September 1999, as the January 2000 issue was being edited. Bell flew to Stillwater and designed the cover. "I wanted to own the millennium," he says.

And then, if you go to Bell's continuing log on the magazine's website (www.truewestmagazine.com), you'll see all the pain, bleeding money and agony that has gone into these last four years. Bell moved the magazine to Cave Creek, Arizona, where he's long lived and raised his two children. And he promised he wouldn't forget where *True West* came from.

"We intend to live up to the new slogan under our masthead: 'No bull since 1953,'" he announced in the January 2000 issue. "This has been a publication dedicated to seeking the truth, no matter how unflattering or unsettling. Today, we rededicate ourselves to Joe's fighting spirit."

A most telling moment came in the first year, when Bell was splitting his time between *True West* and his radio job. His feisty wife Kathy walked into his home office one night and said, "You've sunk our life savings into this magazine. I just wish you'd act like it." She walked out without another word. The next day, Bob quit the radio show to devote himself (often with no pay) to the magazine. (Thankfully, Kathy has a good job.)

Bell says many deserve credit for creating the magazine now in your hands. "If you take anyone out of this list, there would be no *True West*," he says, listing Marcus Huff, the two Steves, Robert G. McCubbin, Rick Baish, Dave Daiss, Bob Brink, R.G. Robertson, Carole Compton Glenn, Daniel Harshberger, Robert Ray, Gus Walker, Mike Melrose, Abby Pearson, Meghan Saar, Sue Lambert, Ted Gàcsi and Jana Bommersbach.

And "not for a second" has Bell regretted the purchase. "I had many a sleepless night wondering what I got into, but I've never regretted it. Work is only work if you'd rather be somewhere else. I don't want to be anywhere else."

1941–1953

High Noon *was a 1950s hit.*

September 4, 1951
President Harry Truman's speech at the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference in San Francisco becomes the nation's first transcontinental TV broadcast.

1952
High Noon, starring Gary Cooper, becomes one of the most influential Western movies of all time.

November 1, 1952
First hydrogen bomb is detonated.

1953
Congress passes Public Law 280 giving certain states criminal and civil jurisdiction over Indian reservations without consent of the tribes. Alan Ladd stars in *Shane*, a Western that has seen its reputation slide over the years.

May 29, 1953
New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay become the first people to summit Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

July 27, 1953
Korean War armistice is signed.

***Alan Ladd in* Shane.**

Summer 1953
Joe Small publishes the first issue of *True West* magazine.

True West, ***Vol. 1, No. 1.***

BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

True West Comes Clean

A look at our mistakes throughout the years.

We were snookered.

Duped. Fooled. Embarrassed. Sideswiped by a "discovery" that turns out to be fake.

In the 50 years of this magazine, the editors made a fair amount of mistakes. We've parroted popular notions that turned out to be wrong; we've taken as gospel things that later were proven to be false. (We've also exposed a fair amount of fraud, but that's another story and we're not here to crow, but to eat crow.)

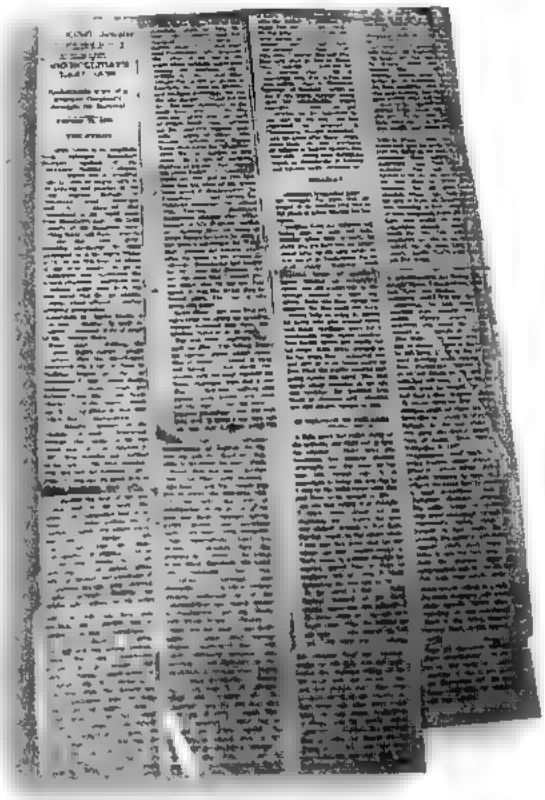
That brings us to our issue two years ago, December 2001, when we published a Collector's Edition on Doc Holliday. Included in that issue was a story we touted like this:

"Doc's Last Days: A hundred years forgotten, a recently discovered article featuring the memoir of a steadfast friend, Origen Charles Smith, lays speculation to rest about Doc's final days."

We were told the newspaper story we presented in its entirety had been published on February 14, 1899, in the *Oklahoma Headlight*. We were told no original copies of this newspaper still existed, so all we had was a mangy copy that had been found in a trunk.

When we printed that story, we thought it was a true representation of Charlie Smith's memory of being at the bedside of Doc Holliday when he died on November 8, 1887, in a hotel in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. So did the co-author of the article, Holliday's descendant, Karen Holliday Tanner. So did the guest editor of the issue, Doc Holliday expert Gary L. Roberts.

After our article appeared, "Charlie Smith letters" were published in the *Tombstone Tumbleweed*, purportedly written by Smith to his parents in the early 1880s. To say the letters immediately raised eyebrows and suspicions among students of Tombstone history is as close to understatement as we can get.



The February 14, 1899,* Oklahoma Headlight, *which published Charlie Smith's account of Doc Holliday's last moments. We now know the story was a fabrication.

– ALL IMAGES TRUE WEST ARCHIVES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

Since then, guest editor Gary Roberts has done exhaustive research into the authenticity of the Charlie Smith letters. He presented his findings to the editors of *True West*, and this is how we read the evidence.

It doesn't take you long to realize that the Charlie Smith letters are not only fakes, but terrible fakes; sloppy fakes, fakes so obvious, they're stunning. And if the Smith letters are fakes, doesn't it follow that the newspaper clipping based on his "memoirs" is fake too? You bet it does.

The Charlie Smith letters are filled with historical inaccuracies, all of which mirror mistakes made by writers like Stuart N. Lake and Glenn G. Boyer. Consider a few examples:

• Giving Marshal Fred White a wife when he was a bachelor.

•Placing the wrong people at the scene when Curly Bill Brocius killed Marshal White

• Organizing the Tombstone Vigilance Committee months before it came into existence.

• Electing Johnny Behan sheriff when he was appointed.

• Putting swinging doors on the Oriental Saloon.

• Claiming that Smith went to Tucson to attend Luke Short's trial for killing Charles Storms when there never was a trial.

On top of that, several passages in these letters sound, oh, too-close-for-comfort to contemporary stories written by others. Consider this example:

• In December 1880, Smith supposedly wrote: "The square cut timbers are loaded into wagons pulled by six horse teams, then hauled past Soldier's Hole, the Sulphur Springs Valley and over South Pass of the towering Dragoons to the distant mines."

• Compare that to a 1972 article by J. Beller in *Old West:* "The squared timbers were loaded in wagons pulled by six horses, then hauled past the Soldier Holes, Sulphur Valley, and over the south pass of the towering Dragoons to the distant mines."

But most glaring, the "Smith letters" contradict known facts of Charlie Smith's life:

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Doc Holliday in Prescott, Arizona, in 1879, just eight years before he died at a Glenwood Springs hotel.

– Courtesy Craig Fouts –

• The letters were purportedly written to Smith's mother and father between 1880 and 1882. But Smith's mother had died in 1845 when he was not quite two years old; his father died when he was about six.

• In a Christmas Day letter in 1882, Smith supposedly wrote: "Received telegram from Father stating that Connecticut River Valley suffered dangerous and blinding snowfalls and that grandfather Smith arrived safely home." Two problems here: His father died in 1850 and his grandfather Smith died 39 years before Charlie Smith was even born!

• Newspaper accounts of late 1887 clearly place Charlie Smith in Arizona when he supposedly was at Doc's bedside in Colorado.

And finally, there's the "polish" of the Charlie Smith letters. They read as if written by a reasonably well educated man who was skilled as a writer. Like this: "It has been almost a year since I set off to see Doc Holliday again."

But we do have an authenticated copy of a letter Smith wrote, in the collection of researcher Kevin Mulkins, and it reads: "I am vell hopping you ar the same and Ol of you. . . huer is not mutch news evry ting abut the same as ever. . . ."

Yes, the Charlie Smith letters are fakes, and so are his claims of being at the side of John Henry Holliday as death's door opened.

We don't like making mistakes

This one was a doozie.

Other Goofs, Gaffs & Cons

We've had our share.

1953

Even though the cover says "All stories true!" almost every article inside is fiction. "Don't make me kill you Jim," Billy the Kid says to James Bell in "Hellacious Young Hellion." "We've been friends an' I'd sure hate to have to rub you out." Decent writing, bad history. It took several years before the authentic West caught up to the Pulp West.

1958

True West lets Walt Disney review the opening of Frontierland at Disneyland. Walt proclaims "you'll find many things to hold your interest."

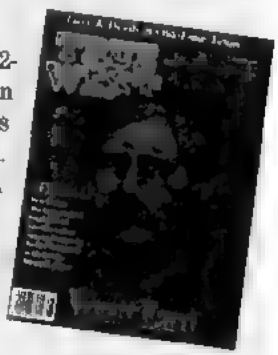
1961

One of the most endearing aspects of the early *True West* are the many old-timers who were still around, telling their stories. Unfortunately, many of the stories have turned out to be tall tales. Case in point: "Outlaw Exterminators, Inc.," (Vol. 26, p. 5) is supposedly based on interviews with one Ray Calhoun. The author claimed that Calhoun's story was published in the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* and *San Francisco Chronicle* on October 12, 1887. Nothing about Calhoun or the events portrayed appears in either paper.

Another most likely phony story is "Flowers for Charley McDaniels," (first published in Vol. 3, p. 13 and again in Vol. 31, p 21). The author claims his father Lewis W. Stone was a U.S. deputy marshal in El Paso and killed outlaw Charley McDaniels in a fast draw, "walkdown" gunfight. No records or newspaper accounts have been found to corroborate the author's account.

1983

True West begins running a 12-part Wyatt Earp series by Glenn Boyer, which ultimately stretches to 14 chapters (see cover at right). The entire opus is riddled with inaccuracies and questionable sources, to say the least. The end result is a serious black eye on the credibility of the magazine at that time.



Boyer's series hurt the magazine's credibility.

2001

True West publishes the so-called letters of Charlie Smith who claimed to have visited Doc Holliday on his deathbed.

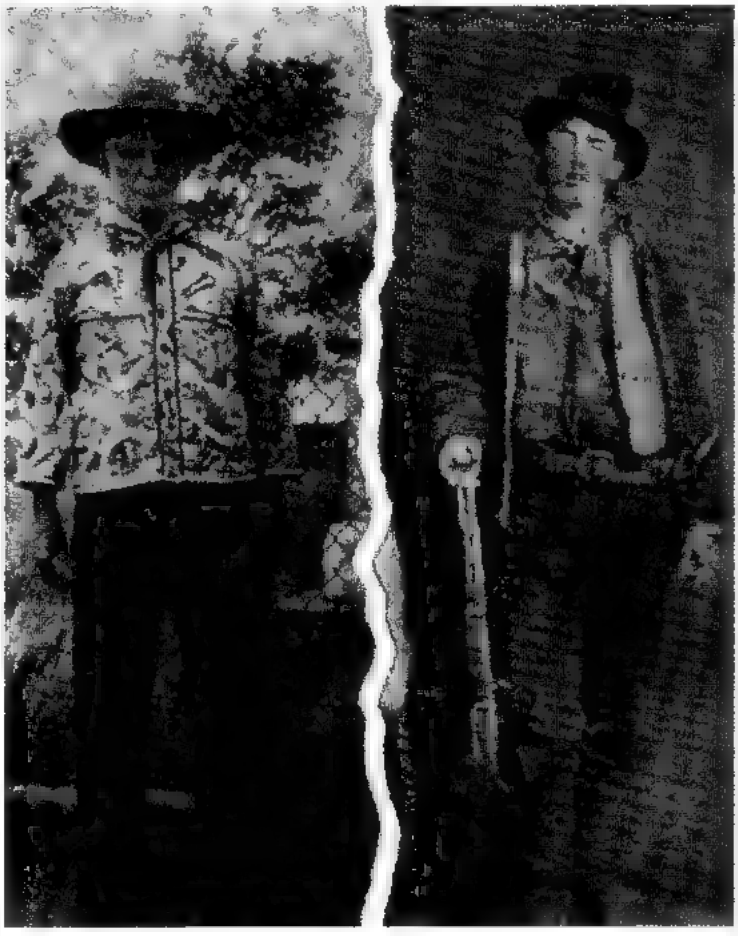
More falsehoods undoubtedly exist, but these are the most egregious. Our goal has always been to find out the truth, even when it means admitting our own goofs, gaffs & cons.

—Compiled by **Gus Walker** and **John Boessenecker**

BY THE EDITORS

Was Brushy Bill Really Billy the Kid?

Experts face off over new evidence



Brushy Bill (left) and Billy the Kid. Do you think they're one and the same?

LEFT, COURTESY LINCOLN COUNTY HERITAGE TRUST; RIGHT, TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

In all of Western lore, the debate over Billy the Kid—his life, his death—is the most passionate. Entire legions of folks line up on competing sides of the question: Was Billy shot to death by Sheriff Pat Garrett or did the Kid escape and live to be an old man known as Brushy Bill?

The debate is fueled afresh with New Mexico's decision to settle the issue once and for all by exhuming bodies to compare the DNA with that of Billy's mother.

True West asked experts who know this story like the back of their hands to face off on the question: Was Brushy Bill really Billy the Kid?

Who's on Brushy's side? W.C. Jameson, the co-author of *The Return of the Outlaw Billy the Kid,* which argues that Brushy Bill was the Kid.

However, Brushy's story doesn't hold up for Leon C. Metz, the leading authority on Pat Garrett and the author of *Pat Garrett: The Story of a Western Lawman.*

Let the debate rage on!

***True West*'s website poll results:**
Do you think it's right to dig up Billy the Kid?
Yes, say 78% of our readers, while 22% say no.

Brushy Bill was Billy the Kid.

By W.C. Jameson

Ever since Texas resident William Henry Roberts was identified as Billy the Kid by a paralegal case worker named William V. Morrison in 1948, controversy has surrounded the claim.

On one side, passionate supporters of the historical status quo assert Roberts was a fraud, yet to date they have provided no logical, definitive proof. Roberts' supporters argue that his claim to be Billy the Kid cannot be explained away by existing history

Roberts was an illiterate man, yet he was astonishingly intimate with the people, geography, architecture and events of Lincoln County, New Mexico, in the late 1870s-early 1880s—an intimacy that could have come only from being present and involved. He was also incredibly knowledgeable about obscure nuances of the Kid's trial in Mesilla, New Mexico, in March and April 1881. Only a person who had spent considerable time studying the trial records would have known any of it . . . or someone who had been there. And, during the 1940s, a number of surviving acquaintances of the Kid added weight to his claim by identifying Roberts as the famous outlaw.

Naysayers who believe that the Kid was killed by Pat Garrett on July 14, 1881, base their contention primarily on the available history, much of which has been effectively disputed and long deemed contrived by Garrett.

Conversely, the notion that Roberts may be Billy the Kid is based, in large part, on science. A number of photo-comparisons on images of the Kid and Roberts have been conducted: all, save one, were bogus, had no statistical validity and were conducted by unqualified and inexperienced researchers who were little more than hobbyists.

In 1990, researcher Frederic Bean classified Roberts as a missing person and sent his image off to a laboratory that administered the world's only statistically significant photo-comparison analysis, the only one accepted in a court of law and the only one employed by the FBI, CIA, Interpol and other major law enforcement agencies. The analysis was conducted by two eminently qualified researchers, Dr. Scott Acton and Dr. Alan Bovik, at the Laboratory for Vision Systems and the Advanced Graphic Laboratory at the University of Texas.

After Roberts' image was compared to the only known photograph of Billy the Kid, one researcher concluded that William Henry Roberts was, in all likelihood, Billy the Kid, and as such, history needed to be rewritten.

Naysayers who claim Roberts cannot be the Kid have not discredited this study.

In fact, an offer of $10,000 for legitimate, logical, coherent and defensible evidence showing that Roberts could not be Billy the Kid has yet to be claimed.

W.C. Jameson, a former professor and author of 38 books, will present Roberts' story in a book slated for a fall 2004 release.

No He Wasn't.

By Leon C. Metz

To believe that Sheriff Pat Garrett shot and killed someone other than Billy the Kid is to believe in the ultimate conspiracy. One has to suspect that respected lawmen John Poe and Kip McKinney knew of the scheme, as did Pete Maxwell, the local *jefe* in whose room Billy died.

Yet, grave diggers, casket makers, pallbearers, girlfriends, ordinary Fort Sumner citizens, drunks and gun-toting buddies must have attended the Kid's funeral. And for better than half a century, nobody ever said, "Gee, that wasn't Billy the Kid we buried."

The most distinctive difference between Brushy Bill Roberts and the real Billy the Kid is that Brushy Bill talked with his mouth. Billy the Kid spoke with his six-shooter. Brushy Bill may have shot folks dead with bad breath, but there is no evidence he possessed a gunman reputation.

Lost in the dispute are a few absolutes. The most obvious is that the mother of Billy the Kid is Catherine McCarty, who is buried in a marked, universally accepted grave in Silver City, New Mexico. Her DNA, matched with either of the two contestants, will terminate the controversy. So, let the proceedings commence.

Still, if her DNA fails to match the DNA under Billy the Kid's tombstone at Fort Sumner, will that resolve anything?

Frederick Nolan, a brilliant British-born, Lincoln County War documentarian, "suspects" that Billy the Kid still lies in that grave. But Nolan's research allows wiggle room.

Nolan accepts the fact that Billy was originally buried in the Fort Sumner graveyard, but he qualifies his opinions by admitting that time, elements, military, civilians, records, vandals and Mother Nature repeatedly conspired to move things about. In short, the Kid may be under the stone bearing his name, or he may be elsewhere in the cemetery, lost among the elements.

Even if Billy is not buried under that headstone but in the graveyard (and that's a big "if" since many bodies have been dug up and buried elsewhere), unearthing a multitude of bones and performing DNA tests may still never help us locate and positively identify the Kid's body.

Finally, if all we wish to prove is whether or not Brushy Bill and Billy the Kid are one and the same, why not skip the controversial grave in Fort Sumner and go straight to Hico? No one questions the authenticity of that grave. If Catherine McCarty's DNA matches that of Brushy Bill, then the mystery is solved. If her DNA doesn't match, then Roberts isn't the Kid. He would be what most Lincoln County War authorities have always said he was: a fraud.

But will the Hico grave dig occur before the one in Fort Sumner? Not likely. Solved mysteries disappoint practically everybody.

Leon C. Metz is the author of *Pat Garrett: The Story of a Western Lawman.*

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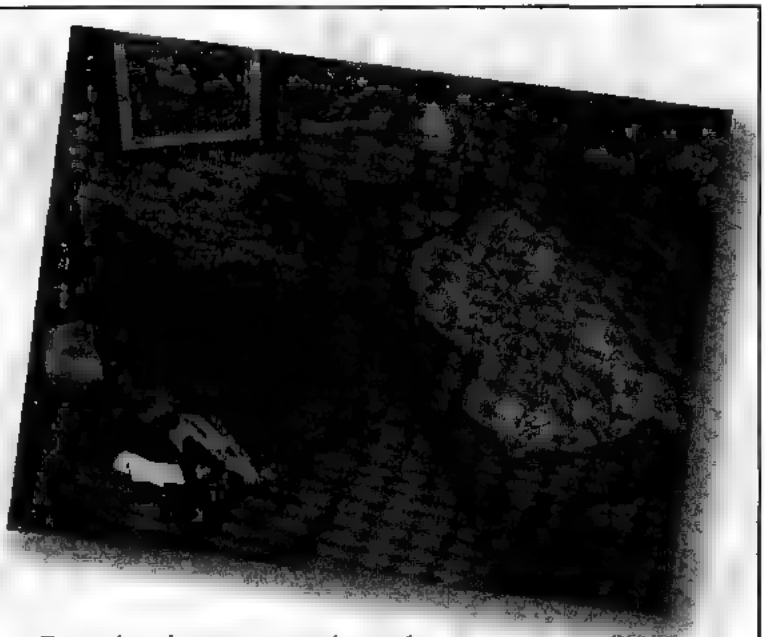

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BY GREG WOODARD

The Evil Plot to Destroy Gene Autry

Or how America ended up with two singing cowboys.

Republic President Herbert Yates (second from left) was often at odds with his Western film stars (from left, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and Bill Elliott), even though their popularity helped keep his studio in the black.

– Courtesy Gene Autry's office –

The year was 1935. The Western movie was dying at the box office. America had been watching cowboys and Indians on the big screen for 32 years, ever since Bronco Billy Anderson starred in the 12-minute epic, *The Great Train Robbery*, in 1903.

During the five-year period of 1924-29, Hollywood cranked out over 1,000 Western movies. A generation of Americans had silently ridden with the great ones: Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard, Buck Jones and Tim McCoy. As the talkies began to take over in the early '30s, the stable of cowboy stars actually grew while the production of Western films started to decrease.

The next five-year period, 1930-1935, saw the number of Westerns drop to 600. In any business, a 40 percent drop usually means the business is belly-up. The bottoms of the barrels (and some old Western stars) were beginning to sag.

And then along came Gene . . . and Smiley

Gene Autry was singing to a large Midwestern audience on a weekly radio show called the *National Barn Dance*. It broadcast from Chicago on WLS. He was also the first to be awarded a gold record for selling over a million copies of "That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine," which was getting good play time, along with a dozen or so of his records. Gene had signed with American Record Company, instead of RCA Victor, with the idea of "not getting lost in a big company but being a star for a little one."

Nat Levine, president of Mascot pictures, was in New York trying to raise money for a new Ken Maynard Western. One of his visits was with Herb Yates, owner of American Records. Yates was convinced the average shoot-'em-up was on its way out.

The Catholic Legion of Decency was on a rampage against Hollywood, pressuring filmdom to start making wholesome pictures instead of movies with guns, killing and violence.

Yates cut a deal with Levine. If Levine would take a look at an unknown cowboy singer, who was making lots of money for ARC, and consider putting him in the Ken Maynard movie, American Records would come up with the financing.

Levine bit

Gene, along with friend Smiley Burnette, headed out to California to be in a real-life Hollywood motion picture. Gene had recruited Smiley in 1933 to be part of his touring show and a regular on *Barn Dance*. The talented duo had gathered a large Midwestern audience. They had done state fairs, goat ropins' and supermarket openings. Now, in 1934, Mascot Pictures and Nat Levine were putting them on the big screen.

The movie was *In Old Santa Fe*. Gene sang some tunes, called a square dance and tugged on his gloves. Smiley played the accordion and bugged out his eyes. It didn't occur to many people that this film was the start of a partnership that would eventually produce over 60 films and generate millions of dollars for the lagging Hollywood coffers. Gene's first movie credit said simply "and introducing Gene Autry." Smiley went uncredited . . . but not for long.

Gene and Smiley briefly toured the Midwest to promote the film. Levine called them both back to Hollywood to appear in a couple chapters of a Ken

After Gene Autry left Republic, President Herb Yates hired Leonard Slye (above) to be his new singing cowboy and renamed him Roy Rogers. The actor's first Republic film was Under Western Skies, *in which he starred with Carol Hughes (above, left).*

– Courtesy Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum Photo Archive –

Maynard serial called *Mystery Mountain*. Both Gene and Smiley went uncredited this time, but Nat Levine had plans.

Next came the classic serial, *The Phantom Empire*—13 episodes of cowboys and aliens. Yates got his wish as Gene sang "That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine." Smiley had a small part in the series, since the sidekick phenomena hadn't quite clicked yet.

Levine was trying to persuade everyone at Mascot Pictures that the singing cowboy gig would work. Not many were convinced. Maynard had tried to sing in a few earlier Oaters. Even John Wayne crooned a tune or two as "Singing Sandy," except the Duke didn't have a particularly good singing voice, so his songs were dubbed.

Republic Pictures is born

Herb Yates also owned Consolidated Film Labs, a movie film processing lab that worked on a large percentage of Hollywood films, especially movies financed by Yates. In 1935, Yates called in all the loans he had made and, in doing so, foreclosed on six production companies: Liberty, Monogram, Majestic, Imperial, Chesterfield and, the most successful of the six, Mascot. His biggest assets from the forced "merger" were Monogram's John Wayne and Mascot's Gene Autry.

Levine finally got his singing cowboy movie made, not as president of Mascot Pictures, but as a producer for the newly formed Republic Pictures. The 1935 movie, *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, was a box office success, especially in the Midwest, where Gene and Smiley were well known. Gene sang four songs, including "Ridin' Down the Canyon," which Smiley had written while riding in the back seat of Gene's car on their way to California. Smiley became Gene's official sidekick, offering up comic relief and an entertaining music style of his own. Thus was born a new genre—the singing cowboy—a film with cowboys and horses that offered romance, action, comedy and . . . good music.

For the next several years, Gene, along with Smiley, made Republic a fortune. Gene was voted the "top Western star in Hollywood."

By chance, Gene found out about a policy Republic called "block buying," which was a method of selling movie houses not only an Autry picture, but also a whole studio line of non-Autry films to go with it. Gene's hat wrinkled when he found out. He confronted Yates and made a few demands, including a better share of his pictures' profits and a shutdown of the block buying policy.

Yates wouldn't budge, so Gene booked a tour and headed East. When he didn't show for the first day of shooting on his new picture, *Washington Cowboy*, Republic suspended him for violating his contract. Yates also filed an injunction against Gene for performing on stage while still under contract with Republic. Then Yates called in a young, unknown cowboy actor named Leonard Slye. After a quick screen test, Slye was given the lead in *Under Western Skies*, the renamed *Washington Cowboy*. Slye was also given the name Roy Rogers and a sidekick . . . Smiley Burnette.

America now had two singing cowboys. Roy Rogers became an instant hit, and having the West's most famous sidekick didn't hurt. However, pressure on Yates from theater owners finally gave Gene some leverage. After six months, the cowboy and mogul met on a golf course. Gene got a fair raise per picture, though the "block buying" policy stayed.

Gene/Smiley/Champion vs Roy/Gabby/Trigger

The popularity of Autry's pictures resumed. Republic now needed to find Roy a full-time sidekick, since Smiley had returned to Gene. Enter George Hayes. Hayes had been playing

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second banana on *Hopalong Cassidy* over at Paramount, where he honed his sidekick craft as the character Windy Halliday.

Republic made an offer, and George became Gabby Whittaker on the screen and Gabby Hayes on the marquee. Roy had a new sidekick, and Republic Pictures and Yates owned the singing cowboy market.

Gene goes to war

After America entered WW II in December 1941, Gene decided to enlist in the Army Air Corps. Yates was incredulous, telling Gene, "If we have to we'll spend a million dollars to promote [Roy] Rogers. We'll make him bigger than you ever were!"

Gene stuck with his heart and enlisted, even though he knew his lucrative film career could be over. Republic proclaimed Roy Rogers "King of the Cowboys" and doubled the budget for the next Rogers film, which would star Roy, Gabby and . . . Smiley Burnette.

Sidekick Roulette (1942-1945)

Smiley Burnette became Roy's new sidekick after Gene left for the service. Republic sent Gabby to wean a non-singing cowboy, Wild Bill Elliott. The sidekicks were as popular as the stars. Smiley actually got top billing in a series of films that featured Sunset Carson.

After his contract with Republic ran out in 1944, Smiley went to Columbia Pictures to help out the Durango Kid. This

Gene Autry on his faithful steed, Champion.

– All photos on this page courtesy Douglas B. Green –

Smiley Burnette, on Ring Eye Nellie, played a sidekick to both Gene Autry and Roy Rogers.

partnership produced over 50 films. Gabby finished his work with Elliott, and in 1945-46, Gabby reunited with Roy for a dozen films just as G.I. Autry was on his way home from the war.

Coincidence?

Yates knew Gene's contract had expired while he was in the service. Although Yates tried to fight it in court, the precedent had already been set. The Shirley Temple Law stated that no contract could exceed seven years. Olivia de Havilland had successfully applied the ruling in her lawsuit against Warner Brothers.

Even so, Gene made a five-picture deal with Yates because he didn't want to be tied up in the legal system and he wanted to pick up some quick pesos. After all, he had been making only $135 a month in the army. When his commitment to Republic was completed, Gene formed his own production company (Flying A) and hired Columbia as his releasing agent.

Is everybody happy?

Gene and Roy continued making films into the early 1950s. Both had highly successful television shows that ran for over 100 episodes, and both had their own production companies. Their fans loved them, and they also made millions of dollars for good old Republic Pictures and Yates.

The evil plot to destroy Gene Autry? Who knows? Life was okay for everyone in the end. Gene became an entrepreneur, while Roy was still billed as "King of the Cowboys." Today, everybody's dead and buried. Trigger is on display somewhere in Branson, Missouri, and we can still hear "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer" at Christmas.

To learn more about Hollywood's singing cowboys, read Singing in the Saddle *by Douglas B. Green, published by The Country Music Foundation Press and Vanderbilt University Press.*

Greg Woodard is a 20-year middle school teacher, researcher and Western enthusiast living in Page, Arizona.

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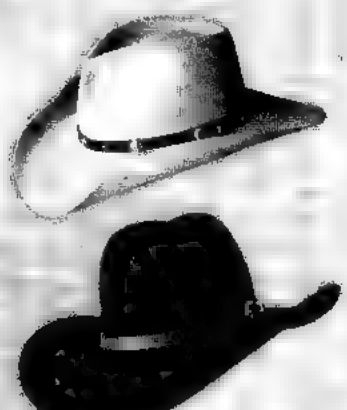

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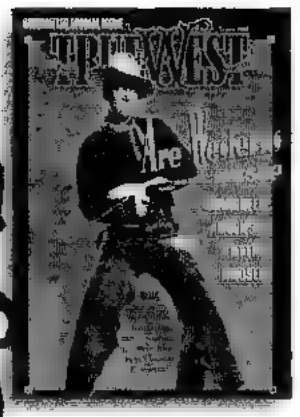
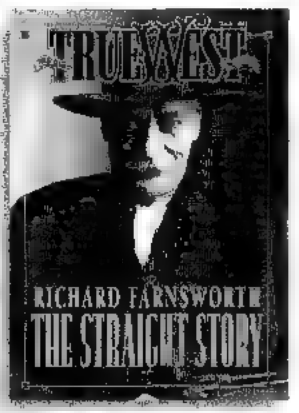


John Wayne
August 2000



Richard Farnsworth
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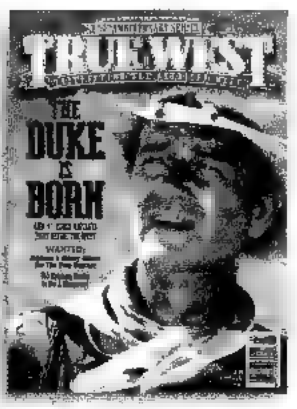

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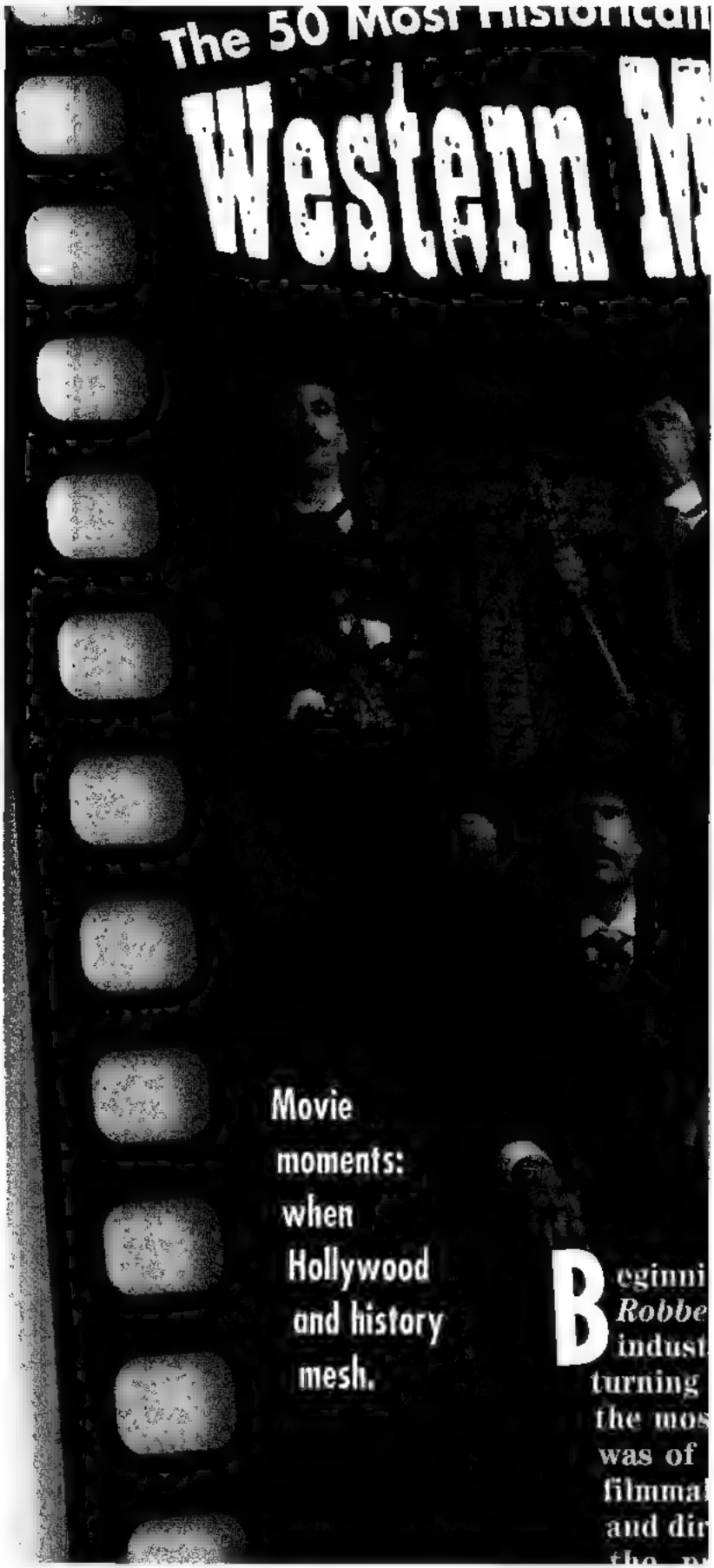
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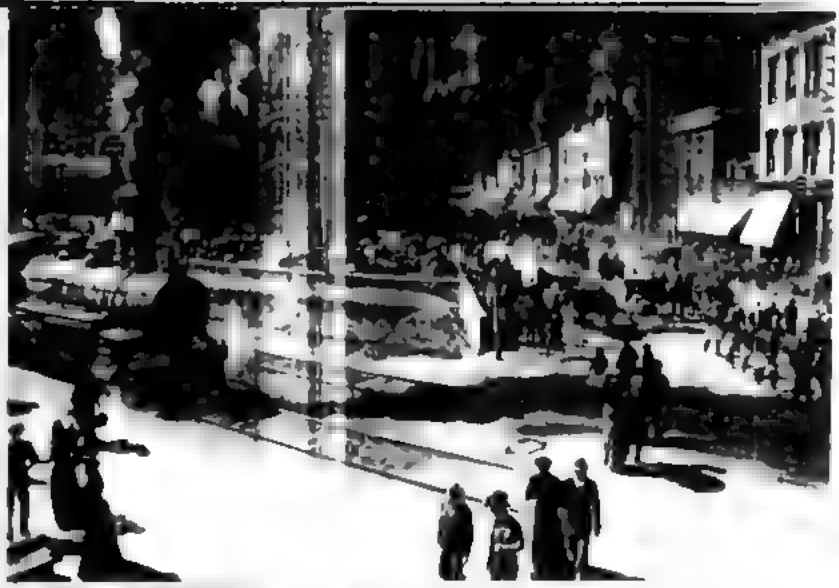


The best scene in Heaven's Gate is when the train pulls into Sweetwater, Wyoming. The huge set (above) ate up an enormous chunk of the film's budget.

– Courtesy Partisan Productions –

in order to fit a particular plot or to conform to political correctness. Of course, to be fair, Hollywood has played fast and loose with the accuracy of all genres, not just Westerns.

Fortunately, filmmakers occasionally get it right—or at least some of it. History buffs can find nuggets of authenticity and historical truth in a number of Western movies.

We begin our survey with 40 films that have at least a modicum of historical accuracy. *True West* firearms expert Phil Spangenberger, who's also a movie consultant and actor, helped our editors make the picks. Allen Barra, a columnist on historical films for *American Heritage* magazine and a former film critic for Newhouse Syndicate newspapers, ends our survey with a bang by analyzing and picking the top 10 most historically accurate Westerns.

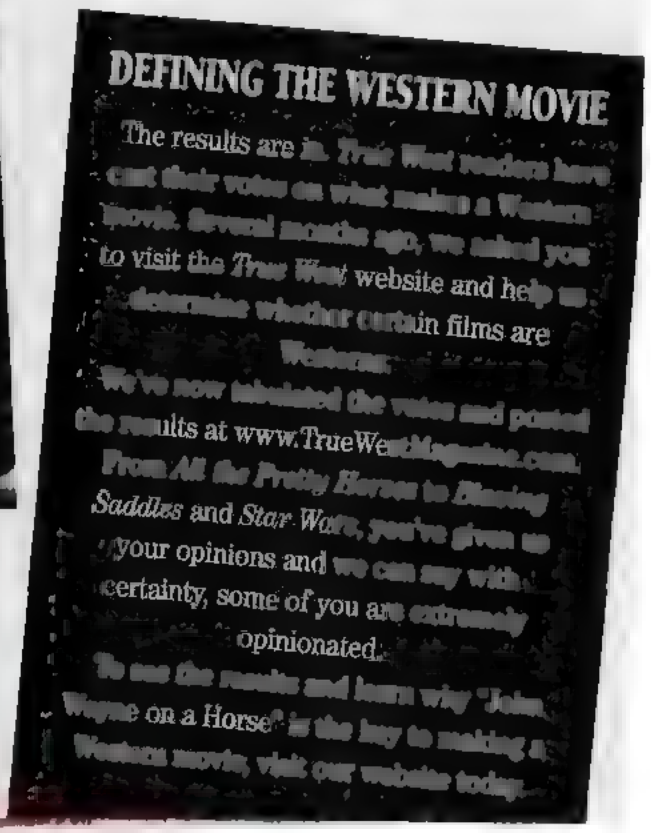
So dive on in and see whether our choices match yours.

Combining historical photographs with modern actors, Paul Newman as Butch Cassidy (left) and Robert Redford as the Sundance Kid, makes for a classic Western.

Courtesy Fox –

Previous page art: (from left) Val Kilmer, Bill Paxton (seated), Sam Elliott and Kurt Russell in Tombstone.

– Courtesy Touchstone Pictures –


DEFINING THE WESTERN MOVIE
The results are in. True West readers have cast their votes on what makes a Western movie. Several months ago, we asked you to visit the True West website and help us determine whether certain films are Westerns.
We've now tabulated the votes and posted the results at www.TrueWestMagazine.com.
From All the Pretty Horses to Blazing Saddles and Star Wars, you've given us your opinions and we can say with certainty, some of you are extremely opinionated.
To see the results and learn why "John Wayne on a Horse" is the key to making a Western movie, visit our website today.

BY BOB BOZE BELL, B G. ROBERTSON AND PHIL SPANGENBERGER

When Hollywood Hits the Mark

Forty doggone good film moments.

1903 The Great Train Robbery

This movie is the granddaddy of them all (although there were earlier attempts), and it is used to notch the century mark for Westerns. Despite supposedly being filmed in New Jersey, the film has good costumes—no doubt because in 1903, the wardrobe for a Western was not hard to come by. An actor could almost wear "street clothes" and be authentic.

1914 The Passing of the Oklahoma Outlaws

With legendary lawman Bill Tilghman as a star and producer, and outlaw Bitter Creek Newcomb in a supporting role, one would think this quasi-documentary would be boiling over with authenticity, but, alas, it is not. What is interesting, besides seeing Tilghman lever-action a Winchester, is how many times the black powder guns jam. Now that's authentic.

1930 The Big Trail

The acting is stilted, especially that of John Wayne (his first starring role), but many scenes in this Raoul Walsh epic are dead-on. For one thing, the West he was portraying was not that far in the past; thus many of the actual clothing and pioneer accouterments were still around. Walsh later said, "The trails that existed were primitive enough to be realistic and the toppled wagons and broken wheels that showed on the film were not fakes or purposely contrived." The Kansas State Historical Society once uncovered some of the film's still photos and assumed they were period photos of an 1840s wagon train.

Based on the true experiences of pioneer Elinore Stewart, Heartland *realistically portrays frontier life. (Front row, left to right): Grandma (Lilia Skala), Elinore (Conchata Ferrell) and Jerrine (Megan Folsom). (Back row): Clyde (Rip Torn) and Jack (Barry Primus).*

– Courtesy Wilderness Women Productions –

1931 Cimarron

This sprawling, early talkie about the birth of Oklahoma has one of Hollywood's better land rush sequences, and the movie is one of the few Westerns to show an Old West town with buildings still under construction. No wonder it won an Oscar for best film!

1935 Annie Oakley

The film has exceptional costuming and shows the ambience of a traveling Wild West Show. Moroni Olsen's portrayal of Buffalo Bill Cody is the best ever.

1939 Stagecoach

Gambler John Carradine looks authentic with his pasty white complexion and Southern ways. Many moviegoers don't realize Val Kilmer's portrayal of Doc Holliday in the 1993 *Tombstone* was modeled more on Carradine's *Stagecoach* gambler than on any previous movie depiction of Doc Holliday.

1939 Union Pacific

Cecil B. DeMille corralled the cooperation of the Union Pacific Railroad, which made available the company's original records on the construction of the transcontinental railroad. The UP also provided the filmmakers with vintage trains and experienced crews to run them. Many of the resulting scenes, such as the track-laying scenes, are moving tintypes in their authenticity. Of course, the recreation of the meeting of the two rail lines at Promontory Point, Utah, in 1869 looked almost like newsreel footage.

1940 Arizona

Although the melodramatic storyline is hopelessly corny, the scenes of Old Tucson are magnificent: children bathing in mud holes, sprawling adobe side streets and dead-on interiors. The filmmakers went to great pains to study authentic photographs of the Old Pueblo and it shows. And yes, this is the movie set that became the theme park Old Tucson. Unfortunately, much of the original "town" burned in an arson fire several years ago.

1943 The Ox-Bow Incident

The history of the Old West contains numerous examples of citizens taking the law into their own hands. Hollywood typically portrays vigilantes as evil or, at best, misguided and has made a cliché of the lone sheriff holding a lynch mob at bay. Although *The Ox-Bow Incident* doesn't completely avoid stereotypes, it does successfully capture the inequity and danger of vigilante justice when a posse of townsmen and local cowboys hang three innocent men for rustling cattle.

1948 Fort Apache

Director John Ford accurately portrays the demotion of brevet-ranked army officers following the Civil War. Ford also shows the military's social rigidity, which separates officers from enlisted personnel. Like many officers in the real (versus reel) 19th-century Southwest, the new commander of Fort Apache (Henry Fonda) disdains the Apache warrior and blunders in his war tactics.

1948 The Treasure of the Sierra Madre

This story of greed debunks any romanticism about the life of a prospector. When Humphrey Bogart, Walter Huston and Tim Holt toil to extract gold from their Mexican claim the audience can almost smell their sweat and feel their tongues swell from thirst. And who can forget one of filmdom's most famous lines? "Badges? We ain't got no badges. We don't need no badges. I don't have to show you any stinking badges."

1949 She Wore a Yellow Ribbon

The camaraderie of frontier cavalrymen is accurately portrayed in the burial scene of ex-Confederate officer Trooper Smith (Cliff Lyons) being laid to rest in the field under a handmade rebel battle flag.

1952 The Big Sky

Although the film's fur trade history is deeply flawed, the scenes of the voyageurs pulling a *cordelle* and pushing their keelboat up the Missouri River with setting poles accurately portray the labor required by 19th-century fur traders. The keelboat used in the movie is currently on display in Fort Benton, Montana.

1956 The Searchers

The film realistically portrays the overall flavor of early Texas and the pride of being Texican. Further realism is added when Old Mose Harper (Hank Worden) signs the words of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) as Edwards tells why he shot the eyes of a Comanche he had killed: according to the Indian's belief, he will wander the hereafter in darkness.

Woody Strode (center) expertly performs his role as a black cavalryman on trial for rape in Sergeant Rutledge.

– Courtesy Warner Bros. Pictures –

1956 The Last Hunt

This film captures the gritty essence of a small, early 1880s buffalo hunting outfit, especially in its depiction of hunters reloading their own cartridges. The hunt scenes are believable because footage was shot during the actual culling of the Custer State Park herd.

1960 Sergeant Rutledge

Despite its courtroom melodrama and racial stereotypes, the film shows blacks in the West as more than one-dimensional props, while at the same time it recounts some of the prejudice "buffalo soldiers" endured while wearing army blue. Woody Strode gives a masterful performance as First Sgt. Braxton Rutledge, a black man on trial for rape.

1961 One-Eyed Jacks

The opening of this revenge classic is stunning, with Rio (Marlon Brando) seducing a senorita in a lush hacienda. Then the movie shifts to the sand dunes of Yuma and the classic betrayal scenes (inspired by the Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid story). Instead of the typical nondescript horses usually rented for Oaters, Brando, in his directorial debut, used thoroughbreds.

1962 How the West was Won

This massive epic, filmed in Cinerama's widescreen format, has several authentic moments in spite of the cliché-ridden script. The buffalo stampede, the train robbery and the wide open gold town (Oatman, Arizona) ooze authenticity.

1966 The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Filmed in Spain, this movie has more authentic looking haciendas and Mexican-style plazas than most Westerns done in the U.S. or Mexico.

1967 Will Penny

Charlton Heston is excellent in his portrayal of an aging cowboy in the Old West. Fearing change and lacking the skills to adapt, the cowboy hangs onto a way of life that is passing him by. The film focuses on the hardship and loneliness of his job, dispelling romantic notions of the cattle trail and ranching.

1968 The Stalking Moon

Captives—especially those who lived with Indians for many years—often had a difficult time adjusting after they were returned to white society. Cast as a former Apache captive, Eva Marie Saint realistically portrays the confusion a longtime captive would have had when confronted by the prospect of riding a train.

1969 Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

Even though historians have nitpicked this classic Western to death, there are still some authentic moments. The New York sojourn and the outlaws' subsequent trip to South America are portrayed in over 300 still photos and no dialogue. The melding of modern actors and historical photographs gives the scenes a realistic feel.

1969 Paint Your Wagon

The costumes worn by the 49er miners look authentic, as does the town—No Name City.

1969 The Wild Bunch

Hailed and vilified as one of the most violent films ever made, *The Wild Bunch* has numerous gritty elements that reek of authenticity, such as the harsh desert plazas and the hard-edged realism of the bloodbath gun battles. In one fell swoop, Director Sam Peckinpah destroyed the Hollywood creation of the carefree outlaw who lived and died "cleanly."

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1970 Little Big Man

Dustin Hoffman's portrayal of crusty 121 year old Jack Crabb is one of the best ever filmed. In addition, Chief Dan George as Old Lodgeskins, portrays one of the first Native Americans on film who has a sense of humor.

1970, 2003 Monte Walsh

Both William Fraker's and Simon Wincer's films paint a colorful portrait of cowboy life during the waning years of the Old West cattle industry. Our favorite scene in Wincer's film: when Shorty Austin (George Eads) asks Monte Walsh (Tom Selleck), "Can you do this" and then gallops his horse to a sliding stop in front of the saloon and leaps off. Walsh responds by moseying up to Austin and slowly climbing down from his horse, colorfully illustrating the cowboy's pride in his horsemanship, and his wry humor.

1971 The Hired Hand

Fresh from his success in *Easy Rider*, Peter Fonda starred in and directed this story about a saddle-tramp husband seeking to reestablish his ties with the wife he deserted. The film uses authentic costumes and successfully captures late 19th-century frontier life.

1972 The Culpepper Cattle Company

The long, hippie-style hair dates this rite of passage Western, but the dusty costuming still plays well. The bearded trail boss (Billy "Green" Bush) is authentic and is perhaps the best portrayal of a cow boss ever. (Yes, even better than Gil Favor in *Rawhide*, and that's saying something).

1972 Jeremiah Johnson

After taking Delle Bolton as his Indian wife, mountain man Robert Redford shaves his beard. Shaving soap and razors were popular trade items at the colorful mountain man rendezvous, since any trapper who sought the company of an Indian woman knew he'd have a better chance with a clean-shaven face because Indian men didn't have beards.

1973 Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid

You can't get more authentic than the scene where Billy (Kris Kristofferson) kills his two jailers and escapes hanging, but then gets bucked off a purloined horse. This actually happened to the real Billy, when he tried to mount Billy Burt's horse in front of the Lincoln County Jail, but his dangling leg shackles freaked out the horse, which bucked him off. That filmmakers would include this small detail (at the expense of Billy's riding prowess) is nothing short of amazing.

1976 The Outlaw Josey Wales

Clint never looked better than in this tale of a farmer who becomes an outlaw after the Civil War. The film has great hats, accurate guns and several authentic gunfights, with the best involving soldiers who stumble into a shoot-out with Clint and lose their lives. The scene was supposedly inspired by Wild Bill Hickok's tussle with the Seventh Cavalry in Hays City, Kansas.

1979 Heartland

Few other films so capture the hardship of pioneer life on the Wyoming prairie. Set just before WWI, *Heartland* so realistically portrays the rigors of homesteading, viewers feel the cold and isolation down to their bones. Rip Torn and Conchata Ferrell give outstanding performances as the single homesteader and his housekeeper.

1980 Heaven's Gate

This sprawling, cocaine-induced mess has more than one spectacular wide shot that reeks of authenticity. The skating rink sequence is wonderful since traveling circuses and skating rinks were a common staple in small Western towns, yet are rarely seen in Westerns. But the crème de la crème is the wide shot of the train pulling into Sweetwater, Wyoming, with the entire town in the background and fireplace smoke and steam rising from the wide

panorama. The train was allegedly shipped in piecemeal at a cost of $150,000 for this short, but stunning, scene

1980 Tom Horn

Although the film lacks flow, the early scenes depicting wealthy Wyoming ranchers dining alfresco on Maine lobster is refreshing as it reveals that Westerners ate something besides beef and buffalo. By describing how the lobsters were packed in ice and shipped by train, this is one of the few movies to show that railroads carried freight in addition to people.

1982 The Grey Fox

Richard Farnsworth, playing Bill Miner, used the real-life desperado's actual .41 caliber Colt Bisley during a scene where Farnsworth buys the handgun. A replica Bisley was used in the rest of the movie.

1985 Silverado

When Director Lawrence Kasdan sent back his entire order for "authentic gun leather" to El Paso Saddlery with the remark, "What is this crap? I'm making a gunfighter movie!" (expletives deleted), history buffs knew the film was going to be lame. And it was. Wrong hats, wrong gun belts (Kasdan demanded the dreaded Hollywood buscadero rigs) and wrong towns (corny, backlot-looking sets). However, when the gun-totin' drifter Paden (Kevin Kline), who has just bought a cheap gun to replace his stolen rig, spots the thief on the street, Paden desperately tries to load the replacement gun and it falls apart in his hands. That is an authentic moment, rarely shown in films about the West.

1989 Lonesome Dove

The scene where Gus (Robert Duvall) pulls his horse down and slits its throat to create a protective barricade from his pursuers on the open prairie is realistic. Although there are numerous "moments" in this excellent mini-series, one of the most accurate details in the entire six-hour production is the way Woodrow Call (Tommy Lee Jones) rides into every scene on the Hell Bitch. Typically, actors and their mounts lumber into a scene from just off camera, but in *Lonesome Dove*, Jones and his mount (supposedly one of his polo ponies) burst into every scene at a full run, with Jones dismounting on the fly

1993 Tombstone

The movie has the best hats and creative, yet accurate, costuming in any Western, bar none. From Doc Holliday's upswept kettle-roll fedora to Curly Bill's playing card-decorated boots to Wyatt Earp's red cravat to the Cowboy's red sashes, this film pays off Oscar Wilde's observation that the cowboys he met out West in 1882 looked like "land-locked pirates."

1999 Ride with the Devil

Director Ang Lee went to extra lengths to ensure the clothing, weapons and dialogue were true to those of the Civil War. In addition, the film successfully depicts the rampant violence by both Union soldiers and Confederate irregulars that ripped apart Missouri and the other border states. And the bushwhacker long hair worn by the Southern guerrilla fighters accurately portrays these "original hippies."

2003 Open Range

Although some of the costuming is questionable (Kevin Costner's hat appears to have come out of a 1930s Buck Jones Oater; see Jones on p. 120), the gunshots in the final series of shoot-outs are flat-out exemplary. For the first time in memory, the audience can actually hear the difference between a Winchester rifle and a six-gun. And with Dolby sound, the rifle reports are loud and resonate with authenticity. The distinctive gunshot that echoes down a canyon makes viewers feel as if they're a part of the scene.

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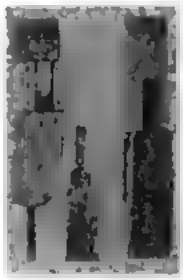

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BY ALLEN BARRA

Getting It Right

The top ten most accurate Westerns.

1950 Broken Arrow

I know, 1950s starlet Debra Paget is not one's idea of an Indian princess, and the Apache chief Cochise was not part Jewish like Jeff Chandler. If you want to be more picky, you could point out that the Colt Single Action .45s that James Stewart carries hadn't been invented in the late 1860s, when the story takes place. But for all the detail that Hollywood got wrong, there's a basic honesty to this film that is lacking in a film it clearly inspired, *Dances With Wolves*. For one thing, the motivations of Stewart's Tom Jeffords are more realistic than Kevin Costner's Lt. John Dunbar. Jeffords isn't inspired by some vague notion of "seeing the frontier before it vanishes." He's a hard-headed realist who wants to prospect for gold and create a better climate for trade in Apache territory. This makes Jeffords' eventual friendship with another hard-headed realist, Cochise, even more believable. *Broken Arrow* is one of the first films to speak from an Indian perspective that Indian anger at white encroachment was justified, and the movie was also one of the first to attempt a portrayal of Apache ceremonies and beliefs with a modicum of understanding.

1953 Shane

Although *Shane* is often referred to as the classic Western, it actually represented the end of the Western's classic era. Almost everything about *Shane* looks, sounds and feels authentic, from the beards on the cattle ranchers to the mud in front of Grafton's General Store to the way Alan Ladd wears his nickel-plated Colt high on his hip. Watch the way Ladd and Ben Johnson hold their hands in London Prize Ring-style during their famous barroom brawl. About the only thing that doesn't ring true is Shane's buckskin outfit, a bit primitive for 1889 Wyoming. No Western ever devoted so much time and care to the importance of community on the frontier, nor gave a more realistic assessment of the impact of sudden violence.

1957 Old Yeller

Everybody knows *Old Yeller*, but how many people know it as one of the most authentic Westerns ever made? From the oversized, secondhand clothes on Tommy Kirk and Kevin Corcoran to the old-fashioned muzzleloading rifle used by Kirk to the danger of herding wild Texas boars, this movie got every detail right about 1880 Texas farm life. Note the joy over a store-bought dress expressed by Mom (Dorothy McGuire). Note the unpretentious charm of Chuck Connors' cowboy and his eagerness for a home-cooked meal. Note Old Yeller (Spike), the most authentic dog performance in movie history.

***The Long Riders'* cast consists of four sets of brothers (left to right): David, Keith and Robert Carradine; Nicholas and Christopher Guest; Dennis and Randy Quaid; and Stacy and James Keach.**

—Courtesy United Artists—

1970 The Ballad of Cable Hogue

Some people who swear by Sam Peckinpah's large-scale Westerns—*Ride the High Country*, *The Wild Bunch* and *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*—haven't even heard of this charming comical piece, let alone seen it. *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* is a lovely tale about a drifting loser (Jason Robards) who discovers a water hole and turns it into a stagecoach station. This plot brings him into contact with a colorful assortment of characters who are always more complex than they first appear. The film's leisurely pace is deliberate: few Westerns give you time to look at how average people got by in the Old West or mention water.

1971 McCabe and Mrs. Miller

Some may regard this film as not belonging in a list of Westerns. To call a film a Western is to imply at least some adherence to the elements that define the genre, and yet Robert Altman's tale of a card shark trying to build the best whorehouse in the Northwest has more period detail than a hundred better known films. Altman's dreamy, gas-lit interiors are the most realistic depicted in any film about the West, and in no other Western has the difficulty of living and getting

around in 19th-century winter been more painstakingly recreated. Moreover, *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* goes where conventional Westerns have dared not go, from the use of opium to the economics of prostitution.

1972 Bad Company

How desperate bands of young men actually fell into a life of banditry is a subject the Western usually avoids. The bandits are generally portrayed as either Robin Hood-types who were driven to the wrong side of the law or one-dimensional blackguards who are foils for the hero. *Bad Company* offers a vivid look at the desperation and hardship that can push fundamentally decent young men over the razor's edge. The film offers wonderful Civil War-era detail and fine performances by Jeff Bridges, John Savage and Barry Brown, with emphasis on period firearms and the difficulty of shooting for the inexperienced.

1972 Ulzana's Raid

Ulzana's Raid has yet to find a large audience, which is strange since the star, Burt Lancaster, was one of the biggest box office actors of his generation, and Director Robert Aldrich had some of the biggest hits of the '50s and '60s, including *Vera Cruz* and *The Dirty Dozen*. *Ulzana's Raid* isn't the most violent Western ever made, but it is unrelentingly harsh. The story involves an Apache uprising in Arizona and the pursuit of the renegades by an inexperienced army officer (Bruce Davison) and his eventual reliance on an Indian scout played by Lancaster and modeled on real-life scout Al Sieber.

1980 The Long Riders

Politics is about the only element not touched on in Director Walter Hill's masterful recounting of the James and Younger saga. The costumes (particularly the long dusters) are authentic, and the use of brothers to play brothers pays dividends in the easy familiarity with which the main characters regard each other. David Carradine doesn't look like Cole Younger, but with his graying bushwhacker hair and Civil War-era Navy Colt, he offers a vivid portrait of the self-conscious Cole. The overheated cinematic relationship between Carradine's Cole and Pamela Reed's Belle Shirley (Starr) can be excused when the rest of the movie is on target. The film earns extra points for the period score by Ry Cooder.

1982 Barbarosa

It's not easy to take a fictional story about larger-than-life legends and give it an authentic flavor, but Director Fred Schepisi did it with this quirky story of how a scraggly bandit with a red beard (Willie Nelson) becomes a Tex-Mex border myth. Weaponry and costumes, particularly the Spanish-style sombrero hats, are superb. Also interesting is the inclusion of a German farm boy (Gary Busey). One is hard put to find another Western set in Texas that mentions German settlers.

1990 Son of the Morning Star

"Historically accurate" doesn't always mean "dramatically interesting," and much of this four-hour, made-for-TV film on Custer is not engaging. But the last 45 minutes, leading up to the Battle of the Little Bighorn and the battle itself, make every other version of the fight seem cheap and hurried. Nitpickers may find flaws in the Reno's Hill sequences, but on the whole, no production gives a better idea of what happened. The locale is authentic, and the clouds of gun smoke which envelop Custer Hill are real enough to choke the most demanding realist. When the troopers pull out their knives to try and gouge shell casings out of overheated carbine breeches, you'll start to hear the arrows whistling past your cheeks. This is also the only Seventh Cavalry film I've ever seen with slouch hats twisted in every shape from generic Old West to Napoleonic.

Allen Barra is the author of *Inventing Wyatt Earp—His Life and Many Legends*, published by the University of Nebraska Press. He is a former film critic for Newhouse Syndicate newspapers and currently writes a column on historical films for *American Heritage* magazine.

No other film than* McCabe and Mrs. Miller *so well portrays the harsh conditions of wintertime in the 19th-century West.

COURTESY WARNER BROS. PICTURES

"Trying to single out one of my pictures is like trying to single out a particular noodle you enjoyed in a spaghetti dinner."

- Gene Autry

BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

Vera Defends Her Honor

Another chapter in Vera McGinnis' life.

Vera "Mac" McGinnis learned from her very first days on the rodeo circuit that a girl has to fight her own battles.

While she'd go on to become a popular member of the rodeo family during her 21-year career as a champion, that's not the way she started out.

Vera had joined the rodeo in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the urging of promoter Barney Sherry. Now she was facing her first challenges at the 1913 Winnepeg Stampede. She was unsure of her new life, her skill and her feelings for a handsome cowboy named Earl, and she was disheartened when the other regular cowboys and cowgirls seemed to shun her. Then she discovered that performer Blanche McGaughy was dismissing her as "a little chippy Barney picked up in Salt Lake."

Vera McGinnis may not look like a fighter, but she proved to other rodeo performers that she could hold her own.

COURTESY OF VERA'S GRANDNIECE PHYLLIS GENDREAU –

In this excerpt from her book, *Rodeo Road: My Life as a Pioneer Cowgirl*, Vera recounts how the insult of being called a plaything led her to confront Blanche in the stable one day—and to throw the first punch:

"She was a big girl, weighing about a hundred and forty pounds to my hundred and ten, but I was packin' more than thirty pounds of wounded pride—which made us even. There were no rules except 'take your Sunday shot'—from any angle. I took all the rest of mine from a horizontal down-under position.

"She was on top, banging my head unmercifully against those ten-inch floor planks, and the room and people were swirling like crazy, when I suddenly remembered my spurs. I'd had time to get only one off. So I wrapped my legs around her middle and started gouging holes in her big wide caboose.

"That made her jump, but I still couldn't get up from under her, though the rooters on the sidelines kept shouting: 'Get on your feet, Mac.' 'Twist her ear.' 'Get her by the foretop.' I didn't know where everybody'd suddenly come from, but I did feel I had support. Then I heard Earl's voice. 'Atta baby, sock her,' he said. And it was like a shot in the arm.

"Her face was too close for a good poke, so I tried to push her up off me and somehow my thumb got between her teeth. Holy mackerel! That hurt. But I couldn't quit. I thought she'd ease up, but she didn't; she was smothering me now with her ample bosoms. So I just opened my mouth for air and somehow shut back down on meat. She jumped and I grabbed.

"'Are you going to quit telling lies about me?' I demanded, holding her down by the hair and a scissors.

"'Yes,' she sniffed. 'I never meant no harm.'

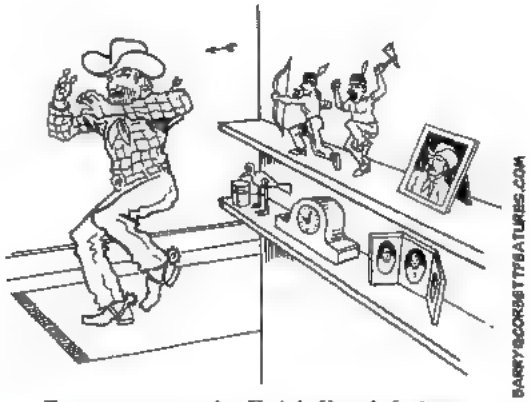
"'You never meant no harm? Maybe by your code, but not mine. I wasn't raised that way.'

"Exhausted, we scrambled to our feet.

"If she felt worse than I did the next day, I don't know how she stood it. After I cooled off, I was so ashamed, all of Barney's horses couldn't have dragged me out of my room.

"That night Earl brought some raw meat and poulticed my black eye while he teased me about overmatching myself. He offered neither sympathy nor reproach, which didn't help the way I felt. But I needn't have worried. I soon learned I'd reacted according to the old approved standard: fight for your rights. Immediately everyone was more friendly."

Next issue: Vera's cowboy did her wrong.



Tex encounters the Knick-Knack Indians.

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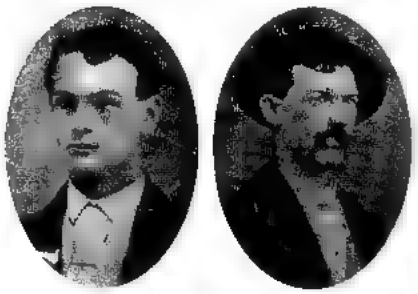

At the time of the shooting, John Younger (left) is wanted for killing a Dallas, Texas, deputy sheriff. Jim Younger (right) never catches up to Jim Wright, who reports the shooting to Pinkerton detectives and then disappears.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Maps & Graphics by Gus Walker

MARCH 17, 1874

Around 2:10 p.m., the Snuffer family and John and Jim Younger are sitting down for dinner at Theodrick Snuffer's homestead.

As they begin eating, horses are heard coming up the lane and the Youngers quickly scramble up a ladder into the attic. Peering through a crack between the logs, they see two strangers telling old man Snuffer they're "cattle buyers." One of the riders asks Snuffer for directions to Widow Simms' (or Sims') house, as she advertised livestock for sale. Snuffer points the way, but the two ride off in the wrong direction.

John Younger becomes suspicious and wants to follow them. Jim demurs, stressing he isn't looking for trouble, and he sits down to finish his meal. John presses his argument, pointing out that both strangers are too well armed to be simple cattle buyers and that the younger of the two looked nervous.

Jim finally agrees to accompany his younger brother and the two gather their horses from the Snuffer shed and give chase.

Three-quarters of a mile up the road, the two "cattle buyers," Louis Lull and Ed Daniels, join up with James Wright, who knew people from the area and stayed behind because he was afraid the Snuffers would recognize him. The trio converse about their search for the James-Younger Gang, while riding their horses at a slow gait.

When the Youngers approach on horseback, Wright pulls his pistol, spurs his horse and gallops away, cutting across a field as fast as his horse can carry him (ironically, heading east toward Widow Simms' house). Jim Younger orders Wright to stop, and when he doesn't, Jim fires a pistol ball that takes off Wright's hat.

John has both barrels of his double-barrel shotgun cocked. He covers Lull and Daniels until Jim rejoins them. The Youngers order the two strangers to give up their guns. Both men comply, dropping their revolvers on the road. Jim dismounts to gather the weapons, which include Lull's English-made .43 caliber Tranter, a Pinkerton standard issue.

Holding up the exotic pistol for his brother to see, Jim says, "John, these are damn fine guns. It's sure nice of these boys to make us a present of them." Jim then turns back to the prisoners and asks, "Where you fellas from?"

"We're from Osceola," Lull replies.

"What are you doin' out here?"

"Just ramblin' around."

John cuts in, "You sure you're not detectives looking for someone?" He tells them detectives have been up here hunting them all the time, and they are going to stop it.

"I am no detective," Daniels says. "I can show you who I am and where I belong."

> "John, these are damn fine guns. It's sure nice of these boys to make us a present of them."
> —*Jim Younger*

One of the Youngers admits to knowing Daniels, then turns to Lull and demands: "What the hell are you riding around here with all them pistols on for?"

"Good God," Lull pleads. "Is not every man wearing them that is traveling and have I not as much right to wear them as anyone else?"

"Hold on, young man," John barks. "We don't want any of that."

John lowers his shotgun for a moment. (One report says John was trying to "quiet his horse.") With John's attention diverted, Lull reaches behind and pulls out a small No. 2 Smith & Wesson pistol and fires. Lull's horse lurches forward just as the bullet strikes John's neck. Reacting, John pulls the trigger on his shotgun and the pellets hit Lull in the shoulder and arm.

Lull barely manages to stay in the saddle as his horse explodes down the

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Both Jim Younger (above, left) and John are heavily armed as they ride to confront the suspicious men. After the gunfight, an eyewitness reported, "I think James Younger took four revolvers off of John Younger," in addition to John's shotgun.

Lull's Tranter pistol was manufactured in Birmingham, England, and exported to the South during the Civil War. The Pinkerton detective agency later bought a surplus of these firearms and issued them to men in the field. The Tranter was a .36 caliber (or .38), six-shot, double action with a 4½-inch barrel (top, left).

Lull gives up two pistols when he drops them in the roadway. The other pistol make is unknown. Lull's hideout pistol is a .32 caliber rimfire Model No. 2 Smith & Wesson (bottom, left), which needed to be cocked before firing. Lull amazingly pulls it from concealment and cocks, aims and fires it before John Younger can react.

Cole and John Younger, c. early 1870s.

The Younger family home on 100 acres of prime farmland in **Lee's Summit, Jackson County** In 1862, the Youngers had five different farms in Jackson and Cass Counties

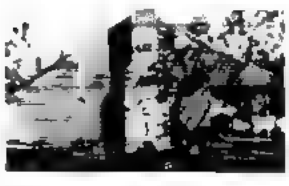
– Courtesy Jackson County Historical Society

Kearney, Clay County
Location of the Jesse James farm

Harrisonville, Cass County
Location of Henry Younger's livery stable and dry goods store

Courtesy Cass County Historical Society

MISSOURI



St. Clair County
Location of the McFerrin Negro Settlement near Monegaw Springs. After the fight, the wounded Capt. Lull and the body of John Younger will be brought to the McFerrin cabin pictured at left.

True West Archives

Gad's Hill, Wayne County
Location of the Iron Mountain Rail road robbery The Youngers were suspects in the theft

The Younger Brothers

All four brothers—Cole, 30; Jim, 26; John, 23; and Bob, 21—are suspected of participating in several robberies, including the Gad's Hill train robbery. The boys travel in pairs and move around continually. They spend little time in their home county (see map), but the brothers occasionally stop in St. Clair County, where they visit friends, such as the Snuffers. For the most part, they spend their nights in the McFerrin Negro Settlement, three miles southeast of Monegaw Springs, where they stay with John McFerrin and his wife Hannah, who worked for the Younger family in Jackson County. The McFerrin's home is a safe haven until the Pinkertons begin to close in.

road. On horseback, Daniels attempts to follow suit, but Jim shoots him in the neck. Daniels falls off the back of his mount onto the roadway.

Down the road, Lull has no control over his horse as it jumps "into the bushes and the trees." Lull later said he tried to get ahold of the reins with his right hand to "bring him on the road," but John "rode by me and fired two shots at me, one of which took effect in my left side, and I lost control of my horse and he turned into the brush and a small tree struck me and knocked me out of the saddle."

Meanwhile, Jim rolls Daniels over and immediately sees his death stare. Jim looks up and sees John coming back from the grove. He calls out his brother's name. John quizzically stares at his older brother, then slowly falls sideways, landing on the other side of a fence.

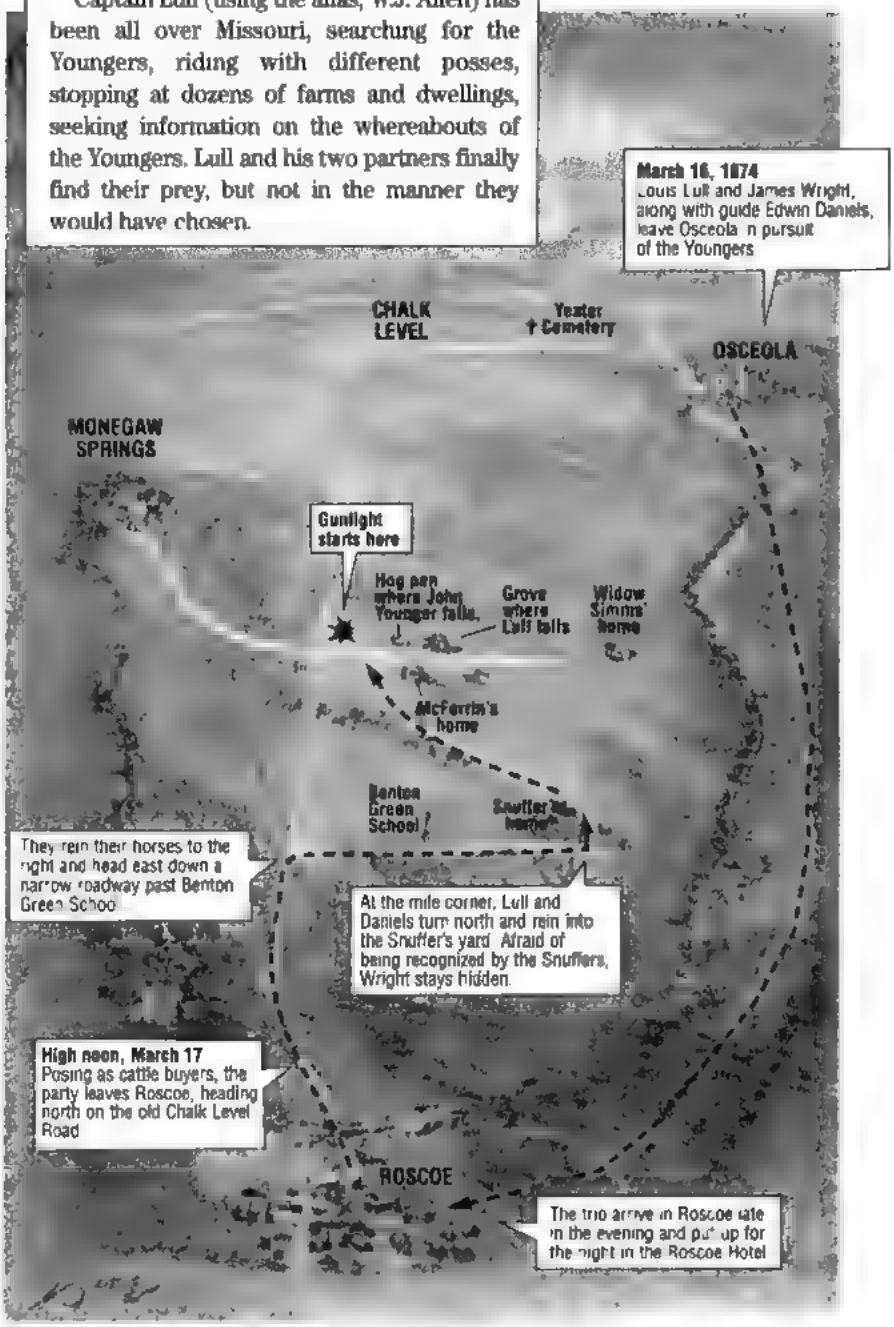
Jim runs to John's side, but his brother is dead, Lull's bullet having severed John's jugular vein. (It's amazing he lived as long as he did.)

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Edwin B. Daniels is a part-time deputy from Osceola. For many years, this photograph has been published as being Daniels, even though the subject seems a bit old for a man of 23.

– True West Archives –

The Pinkerton Posse

Captain Lull (using the alias, W.J. Allen) has been all over Missouri, searching for the Youngers, riding with different posses, stopping at dozens of farms and dwellings, seeking information on the whereabouts of the Youngers. Lull and his two partners finally find their prey, but not in the manner they would have chosen.


March 16, 1874
Louis Lull and James Wright, along with guide Edwin Daniels, leave Osceola in pursuit of the Youngers
CHALK LEVEL
Yeater Cemetery
OSCEOLA
MONEGAW SPRINGS
Gunfight starts here
Hog pen where John Younger falls.
Grove where Lull falls
Widow Simms' home
McFerrin's home
Benton Green School
They rein their horses to the right and head east down a narrow roadway past Benton Green School
At the mile corner, Lull and Daniels turn north and rein into the Snuffer's yard. Afraid of being recognized by the Snuffers, Wright stays hidden.
High noon, March 17
Posing as cattle buyers, the party leaves Roscoe, heading north on the old Chalk Level Road
ROSCOE
The trio arrive in Roscoe late in the evening and put up for the night in the Roscoe Hotel

Neck & Neck

The doctors who examined the dead men reported the bullet that killed John Younger "entered the right side of his neck, touching the clavical [sic] bone on the upper side, and about two inches from the meredian [sic], went nearly straight through the neck . . . Edwin B. Daniels, came to his death from the effect of a gunshot wound, which entered the left side of the neck, about one inch from the meredian line, about midway of the neck, opposite the aesophagus [sic] . . . went nearly straight through the neck, striking the bone; the orifice was pretty large, indicating that the ball was of a pretty large size." The report named Jim Younger as the killer of Daniels.

John Younger

Ed Daniels

Why Did Captain Lull Resort to Deadly Force?

Severely wounded, Lull, still claiming he is W.J. Allen, gave the following statement to the coroner's inquest:

"[The Youngers] said detectives had been up there hunting for them all the time, and they were going to stop it. . . ." John Younger "then lowered the gun, cocked it in a threatening manner. . . . I concluded that they intended to kill us. I reached my hand behind me and drew a No. 2 Smith & Wesson pistol and cocked it and fired at the one on horseback, and my horse frightened at the report of the pistol and turned to run, I heard two shots and my left arm fell, and then I had no control over my horse. . . ."

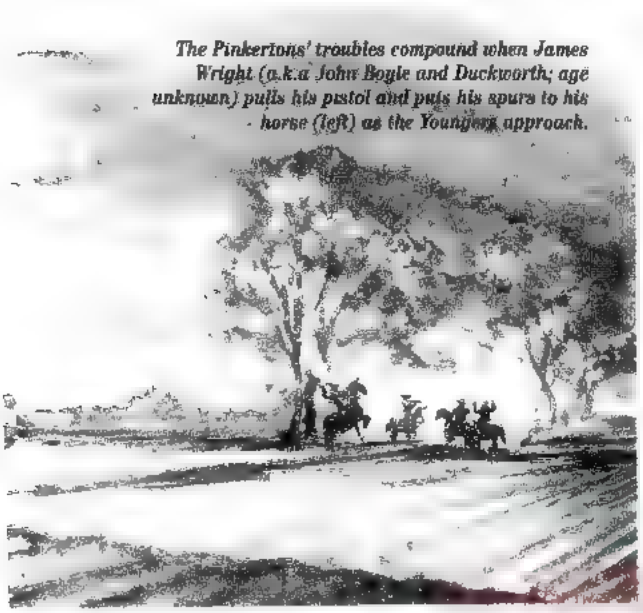
An artist's depiction of Capt. Louis B. Lull, 27, who had served as an officer in the Union Army. He was chosen by the Pinkertons to go undercover as a detective to locate and capture the Youngers. No known photographs have surfaced of the former Chicago police captain.

- Illustration by Bob Boze Bell -

At the time of the gunfight, Lull's mind may have been consumed with the fate of fellow undercover Pinkerton agent J.W. Wicher, who was found murdered near Kearney, Missouri, only seven days earlier, on March 10. It is rumored Jesse James and others killed him.

Just three months prior to this road battle, the Youngers surprised a posse from Appleton City who had ridden to Monegaw Springs to capture the brothers. Taking the offensive, the Youngers captured the posse and confiscated their weapons. But after a stern warning, the Youngers released them.

Perhaps the Youngers intended to do the same with Lull and Daniels. We will never know.



The Pinkertons' troubles compound when James Wright (a.k.a. John Boyle and Duckworth; age unknown) pulls his pistol and puts his spurs to his horse (left) as the Youngers approach.

Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Jim removed his brother's pistols, watch and other personal effects. Mounting John's horse, Jim asked a neighbor who had witnessed the fight to take care of his brother's body. Then Jim rode up Chalk Road in the direction Detective Wright had fled. Unable to find him, Jim returned to Snuffer's cabin to ensure John would be buried properly and then headed south to Arkansas to inform his brothers, Cole and Bob, about John's death.

Incredibly, Lull wasn't killed outright by the shotgun blast to his shoulder and arm, or the pistol shot to his chest. Found by a farmer, Lull was taken to a nearby cabin and, later that evening, was placed in a spring wagon and driven to Roscoe. A town doctor declared that the wounded detective would live, but, after several days, the Pinkertons reported Lull's condition had worsened and he died. Many in St. Clair County believed this to be a ruse and that the detective hadn't died, but that he just needed protection from the Youngers' wrath. In spite of this rumor, hundreds of Chicago policemen attended Lull's funeral and the former captain—or an empty casket—was laid to rest in a spacious Chicago cemetery.

After filing a report with Sheriff Johnson in Osceola, Detective Wright was never heard from again.

John Younger was first buried under a large cedar tree near the Snuffer cabin, where his shallow grave could be guarded. Later, his body was interred in the nearby Yeater Cemetery. The Snuffers and friends buried John at an angle, with his head pointed northwest, so they could later recognize the grave. (They were afraid to mark the grave lest the anti-Younger faction come to desecrate it.)

Two years later, Jim Younger participated with his brothers Cole and Bob in the botched raid on a Northfield, Minnesota, bank (*Classic Gunfights*, Sept 2002). Jim was badly wounded and captured in the Hanska Slough shoot-out two weeks later (as were Cole and Bob). He served 25 years in prison, was paroled, with the restriction that he had to remain in Minnesota, and committed suicide in 1902.

Recommended: *The Outlaw Youngers: A Confederate Brotherhood* by Marley Brant, published by Madison Books; and *The Roscoe Gunfight* by Wilbur Zink.

Turn the page and find out if Hollywood ever got the gunfight right.

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Did Hollywood Ever Get it Right?

Almost 40 films have been made on Jesse James and many include the Youngers. Surprisingly, only 1972's *The Long Riders* deals with the so-called Roscoe Gunfight. Here is how the episode plays out on the big screen:

John Younger and **Jim Younger** (Keith Carradine) are riding through the woods.

John: "How come I never been asked?" (above).

Jim: "Maybe you ain't cut out for it. Besides, we got enough hands the way it is."

John: "You keep me in mind. I can rob banks as good as the Millers or your brother Bob. Ain't nothin' to it."

Jim: "Think so?"

John: "Sheeit! What's to know about robbin' a bank? You ride into town like thunder and cannonballs, guns blazin', scarin' the B'Jesus out of every person in sight until they're frozen, then you ride in the bank without gettin' off yer horse, you dynamite the safe, and ride off with the loot, hootin' and hollerin' the same damn way you came in."

[A horse snorts. Up ahead, two riders have stopped (above) in the middle of the tree-lined path. Jim and John ride forward. A bird chirps.]

Jim: "Afternoon."

Lull: "Afternoon."

Jim: "What's the trouble friend?"

Lull: "No trouble—we're looking for the Youngers. Do you know them?"

John: "Sure I do."

Jim: "A lot of them 'round these parts—big family. Who are you fellows?"

Daniels: "We come here to buy cattle."

Jim: (smiling tightly): "This ain't Texas."

Lull: "What about the Youngers?"

Jim (pulling his Colt Dragoon revolver in a rolling cock and pointing it at Lull; below): "You're lookin' at two of 'em, and you ain't here to buy cattle. Now who are you fellows?"

John (dismounting and pointing his shotgun at Lull): "God damn Pinkertons!"

Lull (looking down at John): "Which Younger are you?"

Jim: "The question is, who are you?"

Lull: "I told you—we're cattle buyers."

John: "How dumb do you think we are? You're Pinkerton men!"

Jim (alarmed that Lull is eyeing John): "I'm Jim Younger. This here's my cousin John. You ain't lookin' for him, he don't ride with us."

Lull: "Is that right?"

[Long pause. Lull suddenly reaches in his breast pocket, pulls out a pistol and fires, hitting John in the heart. At the same instant, John pulls the trigger on his shotgun. The buckshot flips Daniels backwards out of his saddle (above). Lull spurs his horse to get away and Jim gives chase. After a short run, Lull falls from his horse and Jim rides up.]

Jim: "I told you he was my cousin. He never rode with us once. He's 18 years old and I gotta take him back to his family—dead!"

Lull (staggering to his feet with a pistol in his hand): "You broke the law."

[Enraged, **Jim** shoots three times (below), dropping Lull with all three shots.]

Report Card

The real John Younger, actually a brother and not a cousin, was wanted for murder and was the prime agitator in the fight. Wright is left out completely. **History: C-**

When Keith pulls the Colt Dragoon in a rolling-cock maneuver, it is classic. (I watched the scene four times!)

Movie moment: A+

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Good-bye to Our Johnny Cash

Johnny Cash 1932-2003.

– Illustration by Bob Boze Bell –

"John Cash you'd be a good feller to ride the river with," said Joe Small, founder of *True West*.

Joe uttered these words upon meeting Johnny Cash for the first time in the early '60s. They rode the river together and they became the best of friends. Because of their friendship, we've always counted Johnny Cash part of our *True West* family, and we were all saddened at the recent news of his passing on September 12, 2003.

When I came in the office that morning and began sifting through my e-mails, one in particular caught my eye. It was a statement forwarded from Rodney Crowell, Johnny's former son-in-law. As I opened it, I was disappointed to find nothing but a solid black screen where I had expected to see text.

I was about to reply and ask that the e-mail be resent, but as I stared at that empty screen, I couldn't imagine what anyone could possibly say that would be more profound or express more sentiment than that did. It was black and silent, but it said everything. I left it there. It is still there. Better than any words ever could, that black screen reflects the emptiness we all feel in our hearts at the loss of this American icon.

It is with great sadness we say good-bye to you John Cash. You've been a good feller to ride the river with. We will miss you.

—**Larry Johns**

From the Editors:

Time magazine got it right when they said of Johnny Cash: "His was not the rocker's shriek but the dark, deep voice of a man counting out his demons and his losses with the stoicism of a poker player dealt a bum hand."

Kris Kristofferson called him "Abraham Lincoln with a wild side."

In 1965, when *True West* was just 12 years old, Johnny Cash—at the height of his career—was not only one of our readers, but he also recorded an album that bears our name.

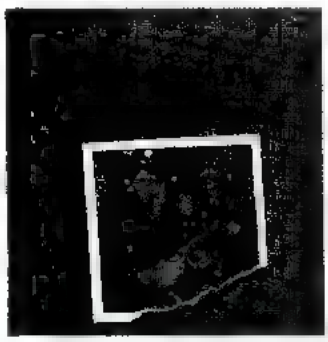
As writer-publisher Jack Hurst remembers it in *Time*: "He was at his most powerful in the early '60s. Back then he was so deeply into the amphetamines that he had lost an awful lot of weight. He looked like a wraith, but a powerful wraith. He was like a prowling tiger onstage. This was around the time he was recording *Ballads of the True West*, and I think he saw visions of himself as an outlaw, with a noose around his neck."

The liner notes tell in Johnny's own words how the album came about: "I bought up every issue of *True West*. . . . Then, while I was . . . in Austin, Texas, Joe Austell Small . . . invited me to his offices where he publishes *True West*, *Frontier Times* and *Old West*. . . . We got excited about the record album I was planning called *The True West*. Joe Small rode the river with me, and we became the best of friends."

They were always friends and that legacy is still important to us. So, as family, we are all grieving.

Johnny Cash's album cover makes Hurst's point: the singer definitely saw himself as an outlaw.

True West Archives



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BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Bow Wow West

The 10 worst Westerns.

Since the 1970s, Western movies have lived and died by a double-edged saber. While it takes only one critical and commercial success like *Dances With Wolves* to send studios scrambling for properties and Tom Hirt hats, it likewise requires just one *Bad Girls* for Hollywood to put the genre out to pasture for a decade or so.

Most movies are bad. For every *The Big Sleep* (Bogie version), there are *The Big Sleep* (Mitchum version) and *Stone Cold*. For every *Them!*, there are *The Exorcist II: The Heretic* and *The Brain from Planet Aros*. For every *Twelve O'Clock High*, there are *Force 10 from Navarone* and *Battle at Bloody Beach*. And for every *The Naked Spur*, there are *American Outlaws* and *Zandy's Bride*.

Yet Westerns are better suited to the cinema than any other genre, making it almost impossible to produce an unwatchable Western. There's usually some merit somewhere. The unenjoyable *The Mountain Men* at least had great scenery. Many Westerns have rousing music scores or foot-tappin' songs—not to mention loads of action. And don't forget star power. John Wayne (*Dakota*) and Glenn Ford (*Santee*) made more lame films than most, but both had such a commanding screen presence that they could carry a movie when the material wasn't up to snuff. Likewise with Clint Eastwood, whose *Pale Rider* is an embarrassing retelling of the *Shane* story. (Clint redeemed himself with *Unforgiven*.) So most bad Westerns, even the ludicrous *Texas Rangers*, can be quickly watched—and just as quickly forgotten.

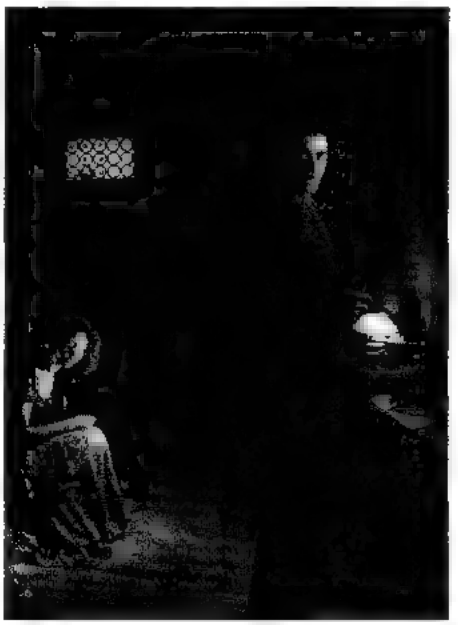
Here are the truly horrible ones, unequivocally unwatchable. My prerequisites:

1. Theatrical releases only. Although TNT has raised the bar, TV movies are typically inferior to big-screen flicks.

2. Gimmicks like *Terror in Tiny Town* are excluded. Hey, folks don't go to see *Billy the Kid Versus Dracula* expecting *Ride the High Country*.

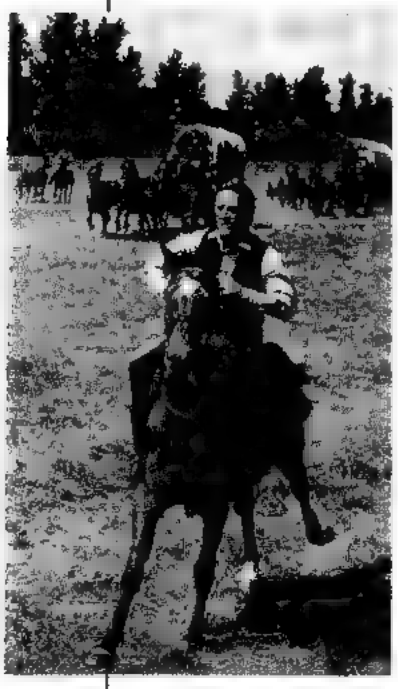
3. I have seen them. If you believe critics, *Heaven's Gate* is among the worst films ever made, but I never forked over money to see it, so I cannot judge.

These are bad enough. In short, the American Film Institute shouldn't preserve the negatives. They should burn 'em.



The overwrought passion between Pearl Chavez (Jennifer Jones, far left) and Lewt McCanles (Gregory Peck) reduces* Duel in the Sun *to a feebleminded soap opera.

– All photos True West Archives –



***The Way West** may be a good book, but Director Andrew V. McLaglen sure botched the film version. Kirk Douglas (left) stars as Sen. Tadlock, who leads a wagon train to Oregon.*

10 ***The Way West*** **(1967):** How can you botch A.B. Guthrie Jr.'s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel? Kirk Douglas, Robert Mitchum and Richard Widmark made many classics, but this—Sally Field's first film—almost makes you forget about *Champion*, *The Night of the Hunter* and *Kiss of Death*. It's an incredibly dull and ridiculously plotted tale of an Oregon-bound wagon train. Watch the film versions of Guthrie's *The Big Sky* or *These Thousand Hills* instead. Heck, watch *The Flying Nun* instead.

9 ***Duel in the Sun*** **(1946):** *Gone with the Wind* blows West . . . *Dynasty* meets *Red River*. What was everybody thinking? Gregory Peck (who seldom looks comfy in cowboy duds), Joseph Cotten, Jennifer Jones (as a mixed-blood temptress) and Lionel Barrymore star in this inferior, overproduced David O. Selznick dud that somehow managed to garner two Oscar nominations. Then again, I also can't tolerate *Titanic* and *The Sound of Music*.

8 ***The Last Hard Men*** **(1976):** Director Andrew V. McLaglen will never be mistaken for John Ford, but his Westerns (*The Rare Breed*, *Chisum*, etc.) are usually mildly enjoyable, although he also directed the aforementioned *The Way West*. Pitting a retired lawman (Charlton Heston) against an escaped

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In case the price doesn't clue you in, Wild Wild West was not a big hit with Western fans. This copy was found in the bargain bin at Walgreens.

badman (James Coburn), *The Last Hard Men* is demeaning, illogical and repulsive. The film is based on a novel by Brian Garfield, who'll never be mistaken for Elmer Kelton.

7 ***White Comanche*** **(1967):** Twin mixed-blood brothers—one a sheriff, the other a renegade Indian—are pitted against each other when the evil twin (hint: it's not the lawman) takes to the warpath. Filmed in Spain during a *Star Trek* hiatus, it stars William Shatner in a dual role, and he hams it up twice as much in this campy, but horrible, pseudo-psychological Western. Beam thus to oblivion, Scotty!

6 ***Dirty Dingus Magee*** **(1970):** Frank Sinatra is a lousy outlaw in this late 1960s to early 1970s attempt at comedy. The film is full of bad sexual jokes and dimwitted humor that make Mel Brooks seem sophisticated. After escaping custody from an inept deputy (George Kennedy), the outlaw stirs up trouble with Indians. And Director Burt Kennedy turned down *Cat Ballou* because he didn't think it was funny?

5 ***The Deadly Trackers*** **(1973):** This Western is an ugly, violent revenge tale about an unlikable lawman (Richard Harris) tracking down an unlikable outlaw (Rod Taylor), who murders the lawman's wife (and scores of others) in a bank robbery. Samuel Fuller, who wrote the story, was fired as director and took his name off the credits. Lucky him.

4 ***The Revengers*** **(1972):** This film is a poor attempt to rip off *The Wild Bunch* . . . or maybe *The Dirty Dozen*. A rancher (William Holden) hires six members of a chain gang to help him kill the gang that wiped out his family. The plot squanders great acting talents Ernest Borgnine and Susan Haywood (in her last role). And Holden looks drunk and bored throughout. Who could blame him?

3 ***Wild Wild West*** **(1999):** Will Smith is agent James West. Kevin Kline is Artemus Gordon. How could it fail? Well, a nonsensical script, computerized special effects gone overboard, photoshopped scenery and unfunny jokes don't help. Though far from great, the original TV series maintained a certain charm because of the camaraderie between Robert Conrad and Ross Martin. This movie doesn't know the meaning of charm, camaraderie or entertainment.

2 ***Legend of the Lone Ranger*** **(1981):** A violent (this is a children's movie?) and feebleminded telling of the classic story, this Western has some of the worst acting ever put on screen. Jason Robards (President Grant) must have needed the money; Michael Horse (Tonto) is terrible, but only Klinton Spilsbury (Lone Ranger) could make Clayton Moore look like Spencer Tracy.

1 ***South of Heaven, West of Hell*** **(2000):** This incoherent, torturous-to-watch bloodbath is about an Old West lawman chasing the scum he once rode with. It stars Dwight Yoakum (who also wrote, directed and called in favors to lure money and cast); his SAG card should be revoked. The story is convoluted, the dialogue impossible to follow and the violence enough to make Sam Peckinpah cringe. Not just an insult to Westerns, this is one of the worst movies ever made.

Johnny D. Boggs' favorite films include *The Searchers, Casablanca, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Seventh Seal.*

"What the average man really wants is some peace and quiet with a lot of noise around."

- Paul Crume, Texas humorist, 1912-1975

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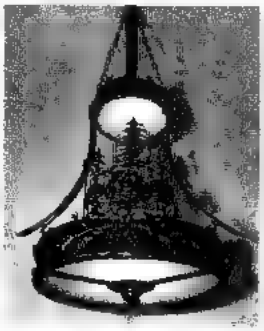

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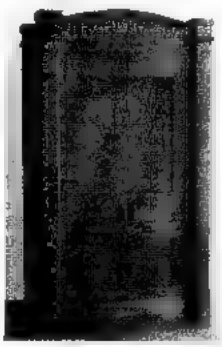

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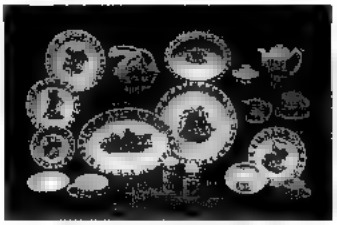

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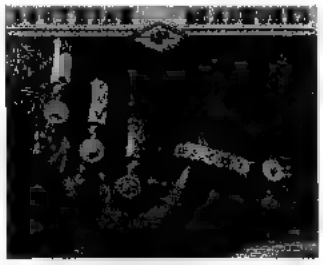

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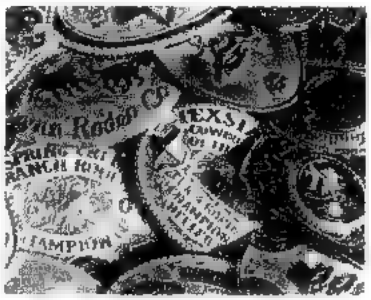

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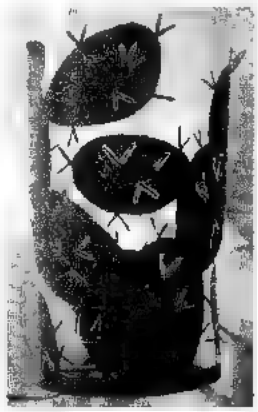

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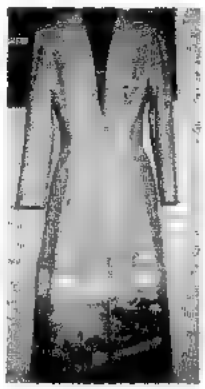

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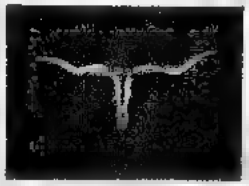

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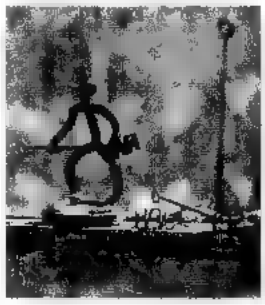

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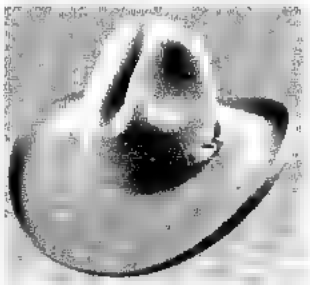

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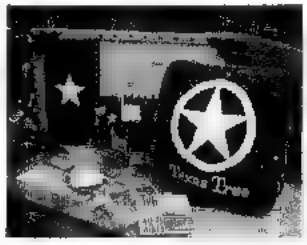

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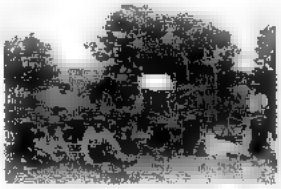

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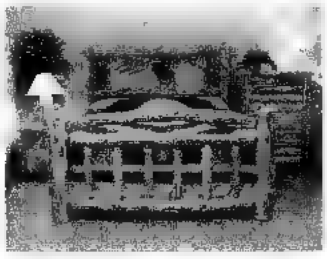

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BY ALLEN BARRA

No Icebergs Hit the Alamo

But the Alamo movie does offer a Tex-Mex perspective.

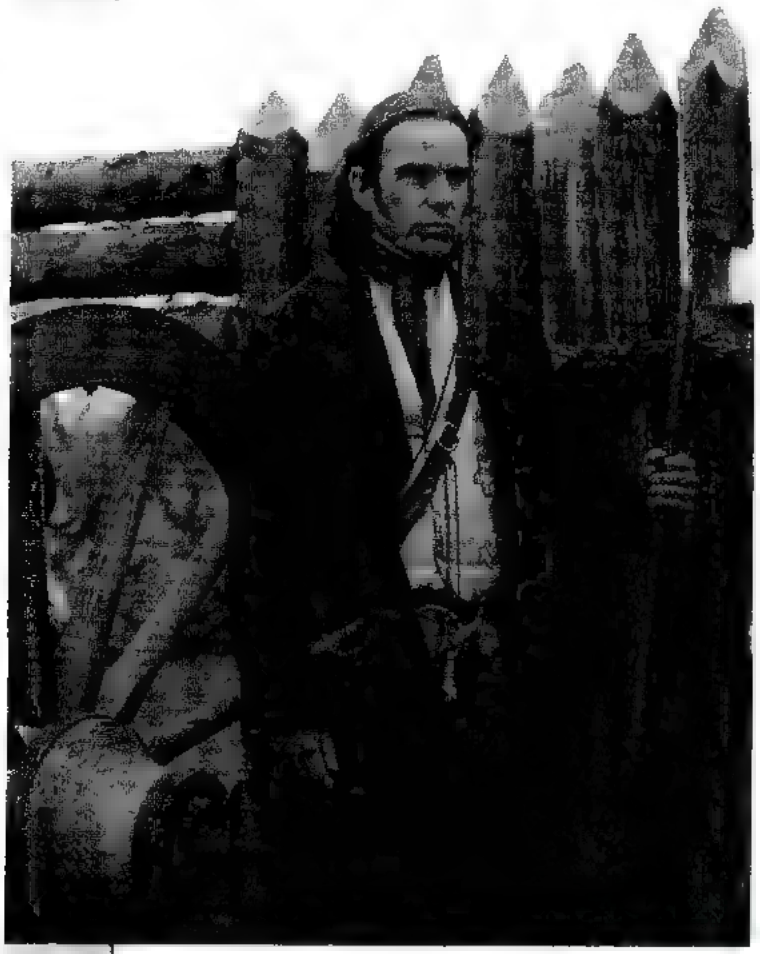
"There's a thousand ways to do an Alamo movie wrong," says Director John Lee Hancock, "and only one way to do it right."

"But," he says with a laugh after a pause of several seconds, "nobody knows what that one way is."

Hancock is a native Texan—he grew up in Texas City near the Houston ship channel—and he knows whereof he speaks. "In Texas the only people who really claim to know what happened at the Alamo," he says, "are historians. The problem is that when it comes to the Alamo, everybody in Texas is a historian."

Billy Bob Thornton couldn't turn down the role of Davy Crockett, saying "What American boy could resist a chance to play Davy Crockett at the Alamo?" Even though he wasn't sure he could pull off the role, his co-stars agree that Thornton's portrayal of Crockett is more historical than any previously seen.

– By Dena Newcomb/Touchstone Pictures –



"I've never seen people get so wound up about a movie," says comic and character actor Turk Pipken, who lives in Austin. "Everywhere you go in this state, people know you're in the movie, and everybody wants to tell you the real story about what happened to Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie or William Travis. And for everyone who tells you what happened, there's someone standing within earshot of them who knows for a fact that it happened a different way."

Scripting *The Alamo*

Another native Texan, screenwriter Les Bohem, the originator of *The Alamo* project, calls the film "The ultimate challenge for a scriptwriter. You want to be 100 percent historically accurate, but that's simply impossible. There's too many good sources which disagree on important issues. Sometimes you find conflicting statements within the same source. Did Crockett go down swinging or did he surrender? Did Bowie take part in the fight at all? What about the line in the sand? Did Travis draw a line on the ground with his sword and ask everyone willing to stay and fight to cross it? Or is that just legend? Was there maybe 280 men inside the walls or as many as 250? Did everyone die fighting, or did some slip over the walls and try to escape in the darkness?"

So how did Bohem and Hancock arrive at the historical basis for their script? Bohem says he read Walter Lord's *A Time to Stand* and William C. Davis' *Three Roads to the Alamo*, before he attacked the primary historical documents. He even sidetracked his research to read Jeff Long's *Duel of Eagles*, which is the leading book on debunking the Alamo.

"You couldn't just say we'll do a consensus of the facts," Bohem adds, "because in too many places there's not a consensus. But I can promise you this—there's a good source in this script for everything we used."

Hollywood attempts to rewrite history

Convincing Hollywood producers to let someone make them the most historically accurate Alamo movie ever was no easy task, Bohem says: "You're talking about a bunch of guys who when you start talking history, roll their eyes. One producer, when I first made the pitch, said to me 'Is there some way to fit a romance in this . . . she leaves the Alamo and he stays?' I looked at him and asked, 'When does the iceberg hit the Alamo?'"

An iceberg hitting the Alamo wouldn't be much more inaccurate than some incidents presented in previous Alamo movies. In Frank Lloyd's *The Last Command* (1955), Sterling Hayden's Jim Bowie and J. Carroll Naish's Gen. Santa Anna are portrayed as drinking buddies; in real life they never met. Although the real Davy Crockett took an entire company of

volunteers with him to San Antonio, in Walt Disney's *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier* (1955), Fess Parker's Crockett arrives with his pal Georgie Russell, a mute Apache Indian, and an English gambler. In John Wayne's *The Alamo* (1960), Crockett (Wayne) goes out with a bang by throwing a torch into the chapel and setting off the fort's powder magazine.

But it isn't these or other historical howlers that anger some Texans. "What bugs me," says Carlos Guerra, an outspoken columnist for *The San Antonio Express News*, "is not showing Davy Crockett or Jim Bowie going down in a blaze of glory. What bugs me is that the guys climbing up the walls are never given any identity or point of view. Weren't they dying for their country, too?"

Indeed they were, a point which *The Alamo* intends to address. "If we do one thing right in this movie," Hancock says, "it will be to show that there were two sharply opposing points of view in the war." This version of the Alamo story will be the first to try and articulate the Mexican side of the conflict, not just the Mexicans who fought with Santa Anna but also the Tejanos such as Juan Seguin, who fought on the side of the rebels.

Billy Bob Thornton as Davy Crockett

The huge new production by Disney's adult division airs on Christmas Day and features Billy Bob Thornton as Davy Crockett, Jason Patric as Jim Bowie, Patrick Wilson as Lt. Col. William Travis, Dennis Quaid as Gen. Sam Houston, Emilo Echevarria as Gen. Santa Anna and Jorge Mollaperales as Juan Seguin. The most controversial casting is Thornton as Crockett, but some cast members insist that this may turn out to be one of the movie's strongest points.

"Wait 'til you see him," Pipken says. "He's flamboyant and charismatic. He really grows into the role."

"You may not believe your eyes when you first see him," Houston-born Dennis Quaid says. "He may seem wrong by the standards of other movie Crocketts—I don't think anyone is ever going to confuse him with John Wayne. But I think he'll give you more of a historical Davy Crockett than you've ever seen on screen before."

For his part, Thornton says the role of Davy Crockett was one that "I couldn't think of turning down. What American boy could resist a chance to play Davy Crockett at the Alamo? That's what I thought after I said yes. Then about two days later it hit me, 'The hell have I gotten myself into? The hell is going to believe that I'm Davy Crockett?'

"I'll tell you one thing that helps, though, is a great script that shows Crockett as a multi-faceted character. You hear so many people arguing about whether he was an adventurer or patriot. My take on it is, hey, why couldn't he be both, at the same time?"

(From left to right): Patrick Wilson as Lt. Col. William B. Travis, Billy Bob Thornton as Davy Crockett and Jason Patric as Jim Bowie.

– By Dena Newcomb/Touchstone Pictures

"The largest freestanding set ever built"

The real star of the production, though, is the set, which was built on private property near the town of Dripping Springs, about 30 miles from Austin, and designed by Michael Corenblith. "You work your entire career to get a shot like this," says Corenblith, who, like most of the principals involved in the film, is a native Texan. "As far as I know this is the largest freestanding set ever built. We changed the landscape on more than 50 acres to build it."

Corenblith's construction crew on *The Alamo* included nearly 300 master craftsmen, or perhaps 50 more men than defended the real fort. "This was a labor of love," says Corenblith, who acknowledges a debt to *Blood of Noble Men: The Alamo Siege & Battle* by Alan C. Huffines and illustrator Gary S. Zaboly. "We built more than 70 structures, including the San Fernando church and the Veramendi house. Believe me, if you ever wondered what it was like to step into the world of San Antonio de Bexar in 1836, this is the closest you'll ever come."

Corenblith was such a stickler for period detail that

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For Texas native Dennis Quaid, the Alamo was a huge presence in his life, making it natural for him to step into the character of Gen. Sam Houston. Though he believed in the John Wayne film version as a kid, he feels it is responsible to show Americans both the Texan and Mexican sides.

– By Lance Staedler/Touchstone Pictures –

when he saw the first illustration of the Alamo chapel with its famed bell curve over the front facade, he was horrified. "That wasn't on the Alamo chapel until years later. I told them, 'Get that damn Taco Bell off my chapel!'"

The chapel hits a sore point

From the perspective of historical accuracy though, the problem with the Alamo itself wasn't how to build it. "We had entire notebooks full of pictures and drawings," Corenblith says. "I think we know as much as is possible to know about where each building and wall stood. The problem was where to put the chapel. Alamo buffs will be quick to note at least one glaring inaccuracy in the set. The chapel is placed even with the wall that runs around the parade ground rather than 60 feet back, where it stood in 1836. Believe me, we didn't do it just to piss off the Alamo buffs. We had our reasons."

Hancock says the primary reason was the decision to film the final assault just before dawn, the way it actually happened. "We never really considered doing it any other way, though no movie has ever depicted it that way before," Hancock explains. "In truth, I'm not sure the technology existed in the past to do a really good night battle. Anyway, we knew that there are too many people who knew the time of day that the real battle took place—they wouldn't accept anything that wasn't a night fight.

"The problem was in maintaining the audience's perspective during the action. You've got a heck of a sweep between the Alamo front gate, the Crockett palisade, then across the parade ground to the north wall. That's where the action starts, of course. You can mitigate the problem with darkness somewhat by lighting fires in several places in the interior. But it still doesn't work unless the audience has something to identify with, and of course, in a movie about the Alamo, the one thing they can identify with is the chapel.

"When [the] camera was on the north wall, the view of the chapel was obscured because it stood 60 feet from the parade ground. Now, when we shoot a north wall scene, you get a sweeping shot of the whole interior. You can see the chapel, and you know exactly where you are."

Standing on the replication of the north wall rampart where Travis died, one has to acknowledge his point. The view of the interior is so breathtaking that absolute historical accuracy seems a small price to pay.

Courage is found on both sides of the wall

No one wants to knock previous Alamo movies, particularly John Wayne's. "Going to see it when I was a kid was kind of like going to church," Quaid says. "I guess at that time in my life it was necessary for me to believe that version of the Alamo. But honestly, I think given what we know today, and given the responsibility of presenting both the Texan and Mexican sides, I think we can do a little more from a historical perspective."

"There's no point in the year 2003, in trying to pretend that Jim Bowie wasn't a slave trader," Bohem says. "And there's no point in trying to soften that, like they did in the John Wayne version, by giving him a loyal slave who dies with him. But there's also no point in being condescending to the Mexicans by pretending that Santa Anna was something more than a tinhorn dictator with a Napoleonic complex. A lot of the soldiers fighting in Santa Anna's army were Indians who were impressed into service. Many of them couldn't even speak

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Read our interview with Billy Bob Thornton on page 115.

Spanish. In many ways, Santa Anna was as much of a slaver as Bowie, and probably a bigger hypocrite about it."

Bohem stresses that "We weren't out to make a movie that reargues the politics of the time. What we're trying to say is that the courage of the men on both sides was greater than the causes they fought for. One thing that you're definitely going to come out of this movie feeling is what it was like to be there. To be a Mexican soldier, shivering, huddled in a wet muddy ditch, afraid to stick your head up without having it blown off by a shot from a long rifle. You'll know what it was like to have the guts to charge in the face of shrapnel that could cut a man in half, trying to scale a wall in the dark, knowing that someone was waiting to club you to death at the top of the wall.

"You'll know what it was like to be hungry, tired and cold inside those walls, knowing that no help was coming, that you are outnumbered maybe 10 to one, and then feel your spine shiver when the sound of a trumpet playing the *deguello* splits the night."

An early Christmas gift

Bohem says that the set will be left standing "as a gift to all the people of Texas and everyone all over the world who's ever been fascinated by the story of the Alamo." Built mostly from wood and plaster, the Alamo fort is sturdy and should be able to stand for decades.

"I hope people come to visit it," Bohem adds, "to walk through the parade ground, stand in front of the chapel, climb the ramparts, try and imagine for themselves what it was like."

And certainly many will come. After all, what American boy could resist the chance to play Davy Crockett at the Alamo?

Allen Barra is a former film critic for Newhouse Syndicate newspapers and currently writes a column on historical films for *American Heritage* magazine.

The true characters of Lt. Col. William B. Travis, Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie come out of the shadows in the new Alamo movie.

– By Dena Newcomb/Touchstone Pictures –

BY HENRY CABOT BECK

Kevin Costner on Westerns

His most recent project: Open Range.

Kevin Costner had been hopping from city to city in his private jet, drumming up press support for his largely self-financed Western, *Open Range*. Now alone in his enormous suite, Costner is sober and sincere, like his film.

KEVIN COSTNER: I'm a writer at heart. And I love Westerns.

HENRY CABOT BECK: Why do you think they've fallen on hard times?

KC: Because they've fallen to TV and TV makes cheap versions of Westerns. I think TV has neutered the form. They suck! They're costume parties. But when Westerns are good, they're really a thing you want to share. You can talk to some young kid until you're blue in the face about Westerns, but if you can show him the character and the humanity and the violence and the other elements that make a Western good, you can bring him in—that's kind of what I had in mind with *Open Range*.

In Open Range, *Kevin Costner wears two hats: director and actor.*

– By Chris Large/Touchstone Pictures –

HCB: What did you bring from older Westerns?

KC: The dialogue. I think great moments get orchestrated by great dialogue. Westerns are Shakespearean, and I say that simply because I can't read Shakespeare and understand it, but if I see it performed well, I understand it completely.

HCB: One staple of Westerns that is a part of *Open Range* is the post-Civil War loner.

KC: People who were pouring into the West had just come out of the most violent war in our history. You can talk about Vietnam and post-traumatic stress, but think about the Civil War and its aftermath you're talking about some very disenfranchised people who were mixing with civilized people, and it didn't take most people very long to realize, hey there isn't any law out here!

HCB: I liked the scene when Charlie explains to Boss who among the bad guys needs to be taken out first.

KC: Charlie knows he's going to take out the baddest guys first. It's like, I'm taking out Doc Holliday, I'm taking out Wyatt first, I'll mess with his brothers, but that's who we're gonna get.

HCB: Boss is an updated version of the older sidekick, traditionally played by actors like Walter Brennan.

KC: Boss is like that, but without the eccentricity. Without the comic relief. [John] Wayne, [Gary] Cooper wouldn't act without Walter Brennan or Ward Bond because it allowed the lead to be more taciturn. There's that scene in the cafe where I say nothing—it's really an award-winning moment for Bobby [Duvall]. I think of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* where people are really orchestrated so well. That scene in the cafe with Lee Marvin, James Stewart and John Wayne. That's really great writing because you've set Marvin up as a badass, and then have him face someone [Wayne] who's every bit the badass he is. People who don't know why Wayne is great need to see that and *The Searchers* and *Red River*.

HCB: Do you plan on making more Westerns?

KC: I'll do another one—I already have another one. I also have a very smart pirate movie I want to make, speaking of tough genres. But I think there will be more Westerns if they make money. This is a $20 million film and most of the movies this summer have $40 million advertising budgets. I'm just glad I had the wherewithal to stay with it, and make it work with *Open Range*. And if I never made another, I could live with this movie.

Henry Cabot Beck is a New York-based writer who spends a lot of time in Arizona. He writes for *New York Daily News, Interview Magazine, Southwest Art* and other publications.

Critics' Takes on *Open Range*

***Kevin Costner as Charley (above, left) and Robert Duvall as Boss take cover during the gunbattle finale in* Open Range.**

– By Chris Large/Touchstone Pictures –

Johnny D. Boggs: *Open Range* is an authentic looking Western marred by a forced romance that doesn't ring true and a slow pace that still manages to build tension. Director Kevin Costner should have focused even more on the relationship between Costner's Charley Waite and Robert Duvall's Boss Spearman. Still, the chilling—and long—gunfight, breathtaking scenery and fine acting by Duvall and Costner give the genre hope, especially after the insipid *Texas Rangers* and *American Outlaws*. *Open Range* is a strong Western, but it lacks the crossover appeal of *Dances With Wolves* or *Lonesome Dove*, which won't please studio bean counters. Bring on *The Alamo* and *The Missing*.

Entertainment Weekly: In Kevin Costner's enjoyably square saddle-and-six-guns epic, he and Robert Duvall play aging cowboys who run smack into the capitalistic heartlessness of the new West. Costner shows an exacting instinct for how to build a shoot-'em-up from the ground up. **B**

The New Yorker: The movie ends with an enormous gunfight, but the real dramatic action is Duvall's voluble debate with Costner, and sometimes with himself, over the nature of reality, loyalty, and friendship, and the issue of moving on or settling down. In this handsomely traditional movie, Kevin Costner has tried to fix the Western myth for all time in the stern contours of Duvall's face and the guttural beauty of his voice.

True West's website poll results:
Do you think Kevin Costner's new movie *Open Range* is worth seeing?
Yes, say 88% of our readers, while 12% say no.

(Left, from left) Billy Connelly, Timothy Spall and Tom Cruise star in* The Last Samurai. *True West contributor Paul Hutton (above, with his family) is the historical consultant for* The Missing. *He says he scored big points with his kids when Ron Howard cast his family as extras in a town scene.

Left, by Jeff Hahn/Warner Bros. Pictures; Right, courtesy Paul Hutton

Other Westerns, or near-Westerns, premiering in December include *The Last Samurai* and *Cold Mountain*. **Tom Cruise** was originally negotiating to play the male star in *Cold Mountain*, but he decided against it and signed on for *The Last Samurai* instead. *The Last Samurai* is directed by **Edward Zwick** (*Glory*) and features **Shichinosuke Nakamura** as the emperor of the army Cruise's character, Capt. Algen, has been sent to train. When Algen is injured and captured by a samurai, he learns the warrior code from Katsumoto (**Ken Watanabe**). **Anthony Minghella** directed *Cold Mountain*, which stars **Jude Law** as Inman, a wounded Confederate soldier journeying home to reunite with his love, Ada (**Nicole Kidman**), who has been coping without Inman with the help of drifter Ruby (**Renee Zellweger**). The Miramax film is based on **Charles Frazier's** best-selling Civil War novel of the same name.

Martin Scorsese will direct the Western epic *St. Agnes' Stand*, written by **Thomas Eidson** and adapted by **Charles Randolph**. Scheduled to be released in 2004, the film is about an outlaw on the run in the desert, who ends up saving a group of nuns and children being attacked by Apaches.

Where will you find **Val Kilmer** (*Tombstone*), **Tommy Lee Jones** (*Lonesome Dove*), **Cate Blanchett** (*Elizabeth*) and **Evan Rachel Wood** (*Simone*) this upcoming January? In **Ron Howard's** film, *The Missing*, which is also based on an Eidson novel called *The Last Ride*. Maggie Gilkenson (Blanchett) is raising her two daughters in the wilderness when her oldest daughter (Wood) is kidnapped. In order to save her daughter, Maggie enlists the help of her own estranged father (Jones).

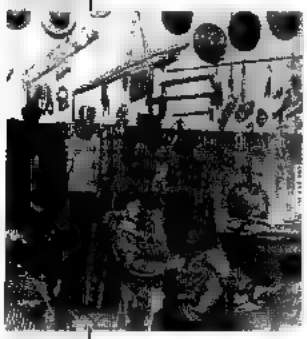
HBO's advertisement for *And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself* (right) hits a homerun, as it cleverly portrays the character Pancho Villa (**Antonio Banderas**) in his dual role as a revolutionary/movie star.

Westerns channel on Encore: The last of the channel's Century of Westerns ends with—what else—the new Westerns from 1980 on.

BY MEGHAN SAAR

Being True to Himself

The art of Maynard Dixon.



Maynard Dixon in his studio.

– ALL IMAGES COURTESY DONALD J. HAGERTY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

Determined to illustrate the Old West, 16-year-old Maynard Dixon sent two sketchbooks to cowboy artist Frederic Remington. In a letter dated September 3, 1891, Remington wrote that he enjoyed Dixon's sketches, even saying that Dixon drew better than Remington had at his age, but he cautioned the young artist: "Be always true to yourself—to the way and the things you see in nature—if you imitate any other man ever so little you are 'gone.'"

Dixon did not immediately grasp his mentor's advice. Starting with his first published illustration in the December 1893 *Overland Monthly*, when he was 18, Dixon illustrated the mythic wild West. Eventually, he decided he could no longer portray the West in "false" terms.

His transformation began in the summer of 1902, when he visited a trading post in Ganado, Arizona, run by John Lorenzo Hubbell. The young artist was so impressed by the dynamic designs and rich colors in the Navajo textiles traded at the post, that he brought some home with him to hang in his San Francisco studio. (See Dixon in studio, left.)

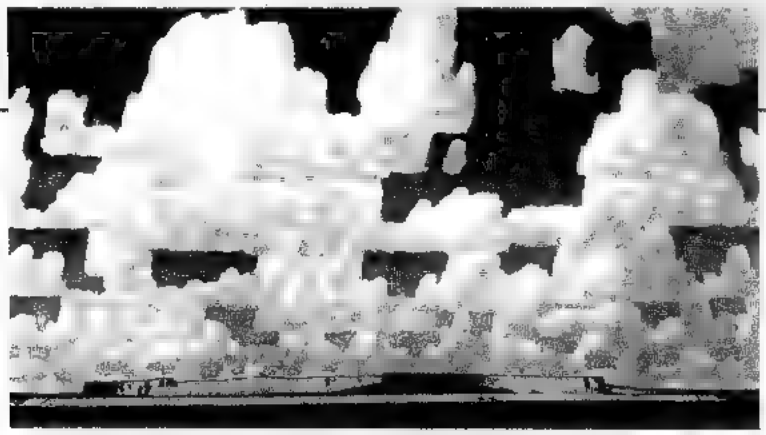
From that trip, Dixon also sketched the landscape and culture of Navajo country, although he noted some difficulty in drawing the Navajos themselves. He wrote about his trip to Ganado in a letter to his surrogate father, Charles F. Lummis, editor of *Land of Sunshine*: "Indians have a silent way of being not sketchable when they so will it, though they remain in plain view. The Navajo are all right to paint if you nail them to a post and have somebody hold a gun to 'em while you do it."

Dixon succeeded in winning the Navajos' trust, as his first cover art for *Sunset* magazine was *Navajo Indian From Life*, in the February 1903 issue. The image met with great success. It not only became a visual motif in the magazine's masthead, but it also was used in later magazine promotions.

Parley Louis, the Pima Indian who modeled for the cover,

Envoys of Peace ***was one of the murals in a commission assignment that Dixon said turned him into a serious painter.***

COURTESY CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY, SACRAMENTO, CA –



(Above) Dixon's painting,* Cloud World, *was done in a cubist-realist style. (Right) Dixon was nearly murdered by the model for* Navajo Indian From Life, *which was the artist's first cover for* Sunset *magazine.

– Right, courtesy California State Library, Sacramento, CA

however, lost his job several years later and went on a drunken rampage to exterminate all white men. When Dixon entered his studio one night, his own Colt .45 was pressed to his neck by Louis. Dixon briefly struggled with him, but luckily, they were interrupted by nearby artists who heard the commotion. Louis ran out the door, never to be seen again.

By 1912, Dixon was one of the leading illustrators of Western stories in the United States. But it was that year he officially shed his work as an illustrator, with his statement, "As a painter . . . I date from 1912."

His announcement stemmed from a mural commission from Anita Baldwin McClaughry. Although this was not his first commission for a mural (that came from the Southern Pacific Railroad in Tucson, Arizona), Dixon regarded the assignment to paint murals for the Indian Hall and Jinks Room in McClaughry's home as a sign that he was now a serious painter. (See a section of *Envoys of Peace*, on opposite page, one large panel of four that hung in the Indian Hall.)

When he visited Hopi Land in 1923, Dixon painted *The Wise Men*, which showed a Hopi ceremonial procession, celebrating the cycles of life. For Dixon, the Hopis represented pure Native American culture, more so than the Navajos, whose culture had been infiltrated by whites. ". . . when you see one of their ceremonies—there for an hour something fine flashes out clear; there is savage beauty in them. . . . From them the scientist recreates the ancient world, the artist creates a new one," said Dixon, in a letter to his friend Robert MacBeth, director of MacBeth Galleries in New York.

From the 1920s on, landscapes overshadowed or completely shut out the human element in Dixon's art. His 1925 painting *Cloud World* was done in a cubist-realist style, and viewers often miss the two horseback figures riding below the mesa.

Although he would marry three times and have three children, Dixon was a solitary man, often traveling by himself, or with an artist friend, and leaving his family behind. But this American realist still painted the memories of his travels until the day he died, November 13, 1946, in Tucson, Arizona.

His last mural, for the Santa Fe Railway's ticket office in Los Angeles, was completed five days before his death. Unlike some of his other murals, which were destroyed when buildings were remodeled or torn down, this one was rescued by a collector after the office closed and donated to the Arizona Veteran's Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix, Arizona.

To read more about Maynard Dixon's life, pick up Donald J. Hagerty's Desert Dreams: The Art and Life of Maynard Dixon, *published by Gibbs-Smith Publisher.*

***Dixon's trip to Hopi Land inspired* The Wise Men.**

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BY CORINNE BROWN

Holiday Hoe-downs

And other reasons to dress Western

At the Golden, Colorado, annual Christmas Ball, Craig Campbell (above, left) wears a red silk tie, Wahmaker pants, custom velvet vest and frock coat, and hat by Sawtooth Custom Hats. Gladys Funke (above, right) wears a doeskin jacket, ruffled skirt and Sawtooth hat.

– By David Richardson –

Cowboy Balls are a sure way to get in touch with the Old West in you.

Just what is it about 1880s ambiance that invites everyone to let their hair down? No one knows for sure, but there's barely a man alive who won't step up to the occasion dressed to the nines in frontier finery: banded collar shirt, silk vest, watch-fob and frock coat. Women, too, will shed layers of protective clothing to step out as a florid barroom floozie or alternately, pile on the taffeta, lace and plumes to share a waltz in the height of Victorian fashion.

This cowboy (below) styles it up with a Stetson Solaro and Wahmaker's Doc Stripe shirt, Baker City vest and string tie. To finish the look, an upscale Tony Lama belt dresses up his Wranglers.

– Courtesy Silver J Western Wear

Whether you're a desperado or a dandy, a Victorian belle or honky-tonk bar bait, the secret lies in the magic of costume. Putting on something from the past adds a sense of identification to every finishing touch. After all, if you look like Wyatt Earp, then maybe you are like him, too?

Colorful cowboy balls are held from San Antonio to Santa Fe. A new Colorado tradition of a formal cowboy ball and dinner has recently been adopted by Golden, Colorado, and is sponsored by the local chamber to increase appreciation of Golden's pioneer Western heritage. The colorful event is part of a month-long holiday celebration held each December.

If you attend one of these "historic" events, it's no-holds-barred on what constitutes traditional Victorian garb, though a few rules apply:

- Most ladies wearing corsets can dance only two in a row.
- Men in frock coats must not conceal more than one flask in a breast-coat pocket or the dancing feels weird.
- Flat boots are better than high-heeled ones.
- No spurs.
- Don't be caught dead in fringes and rhinestones: strictly Hollywood and 50 years too late.

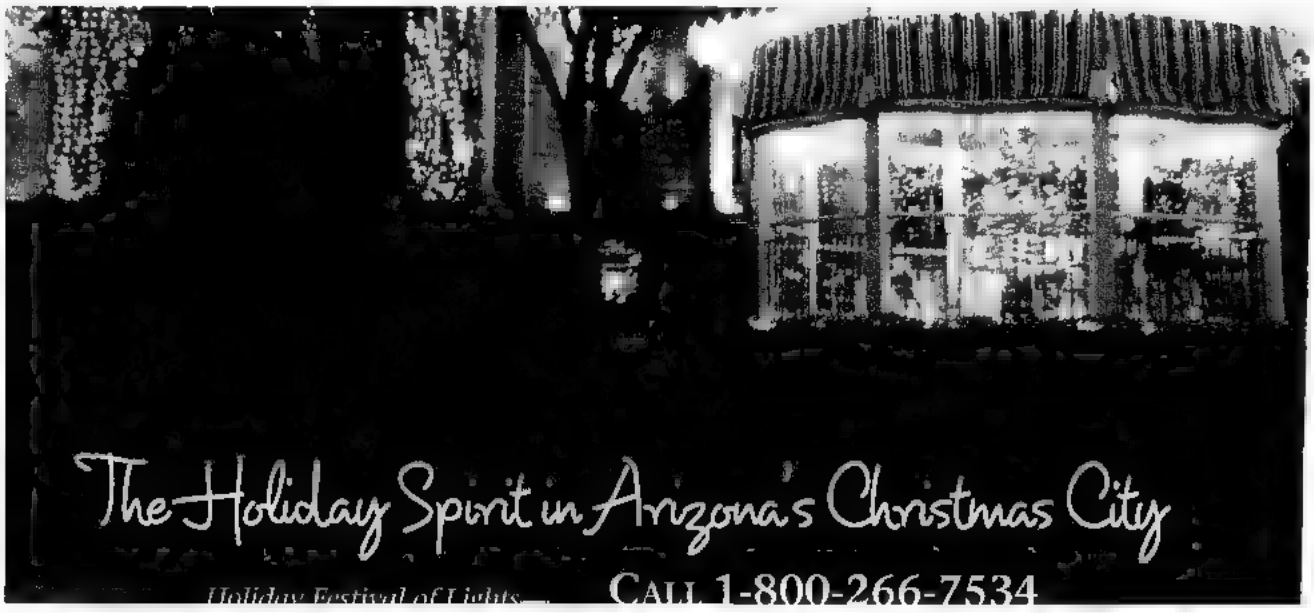
Corinne

(Clockwise: from left to right):
Rows and rows of gorgeous white lace form the skirt of this Civil War-era ball gown, which has off-the-shoulder full sleeves, a bodice trimmed with white satin rosettes and a white satin waist back bow.

The beaded lace trim at the ball gown's hem and around the shoulders adds oomph to the iridescent taffetas. The underskirt is ruffled satin.

Rosettes encircle the shoulders of this full skirted gown, which has reembroidered lace trimming the hem and neckline, a bow and rosette on the skirt front and an overskirt that flounces and drops in the back.

ALL COURTESY RECOLLECTIONS –


The Holiday Spirit in Arizona's Christmas City
Holiday Festival of Lights
CALL 1-800-266-7534

BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

The Heard Museum

The nation's stellar collection of Native American art.

"One of the world's leading repositories of Native American art and culture. . . ."

"The nation's most prestigious private Indian arts center. . . ."

"Quite simply, the Heard is the finest museum in Arizona and probably the world's greatest monument to Native Americans."

That kind of praise is becoming commonplace for Phoenix's Heard Museum, a 74-year-old institution that began as one couple's home and private art collection.

Dedicated to the cultures of native people throughout North America, the Heard has more than 32,000 art and ethnographic objects. Its collection of more than 3,600 Native American works of art documents the 20th-century development of the Indian fine art movement, including work by such renowned artists as Fred Kabotie, Helen Hardin, Allan Houser and Oscar Howe.

Among the stars of the Heard are:

- The Barry Goldwater Collection of 437 historic Hopi kachina dolls carved from the late 1800s to the 1960s, as well as over 1,000 photographs and slides of Arizona taken by the late U.S. senator.
- The 4,000-item Fred Harvey Fine Arts Collection from the turn-of-the-century and early 1900s.
- The C.G. Wallace Collection of more than 600 pieces of Navajo and Zuni jewelry made from the 1920s through the 1940s.
- The Read Mullan Collection of prize-winning Navajo textiles.
- The Bryon Harvey III collection of more than 2,000 ethnographic objects of Southwest and Plains Indians.

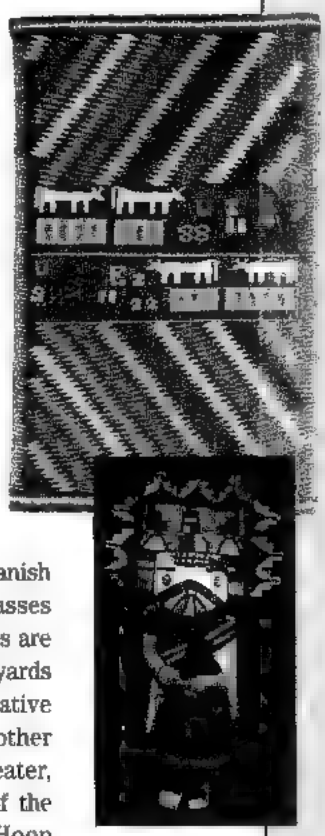
The Heard Museum was founded by Dwight and Maie Bartlett Heard, who settled in tiny Phoenix in 1895 when the town had 4,000 residents. Mr. Heard created the Bartlett-Heard Land and Cattle Company south of Phoenix, and as president of the Cotton Growers Association, he helped make Arizona cotton an international commodity. He later owned *The Arizona Republic* newspaper and besides all that, the Heards are credited with introducing palm trees to Phoenix.

Mr. Heard died shortly before the Museum opened to the public in 1929, but his wife carried on the collection until her death in 1951. In the early days of the museum, she'd often answer the doorbell herself, taking visitors on tours of the 12 small galleries that were clustered around a courtyard.

Today, after several expansions, the Heard Museum maintains its Spanish architecture, but now encompasses 130,000 square feet. Exhibit galleries are built around five beautiful courtyards where you often can find Native American artists at work. Another feature is an outdoor amphitheater, which each February is the site of the annual World Championship Hoop Dance Contest. The museum also sponsors the Indian Fair and Market the first weekend in March, which is one of the nation's best showcases for contemporary Indian art. Other special exhibits and events are held throughout the year.

The Heard Museum has become one of Phoenix's major attractions, and boasts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

Visit www.heard.org for more information.



(Top) Navajo pictorial train textile, c. 1885. (Bottom) Pahlikmana kachina doll.

– Courtesy Heard Museum/Fred Harvey Fine Arts Collection

"People like Westerns because they always know who's gonna win."

- Hoot Gibson

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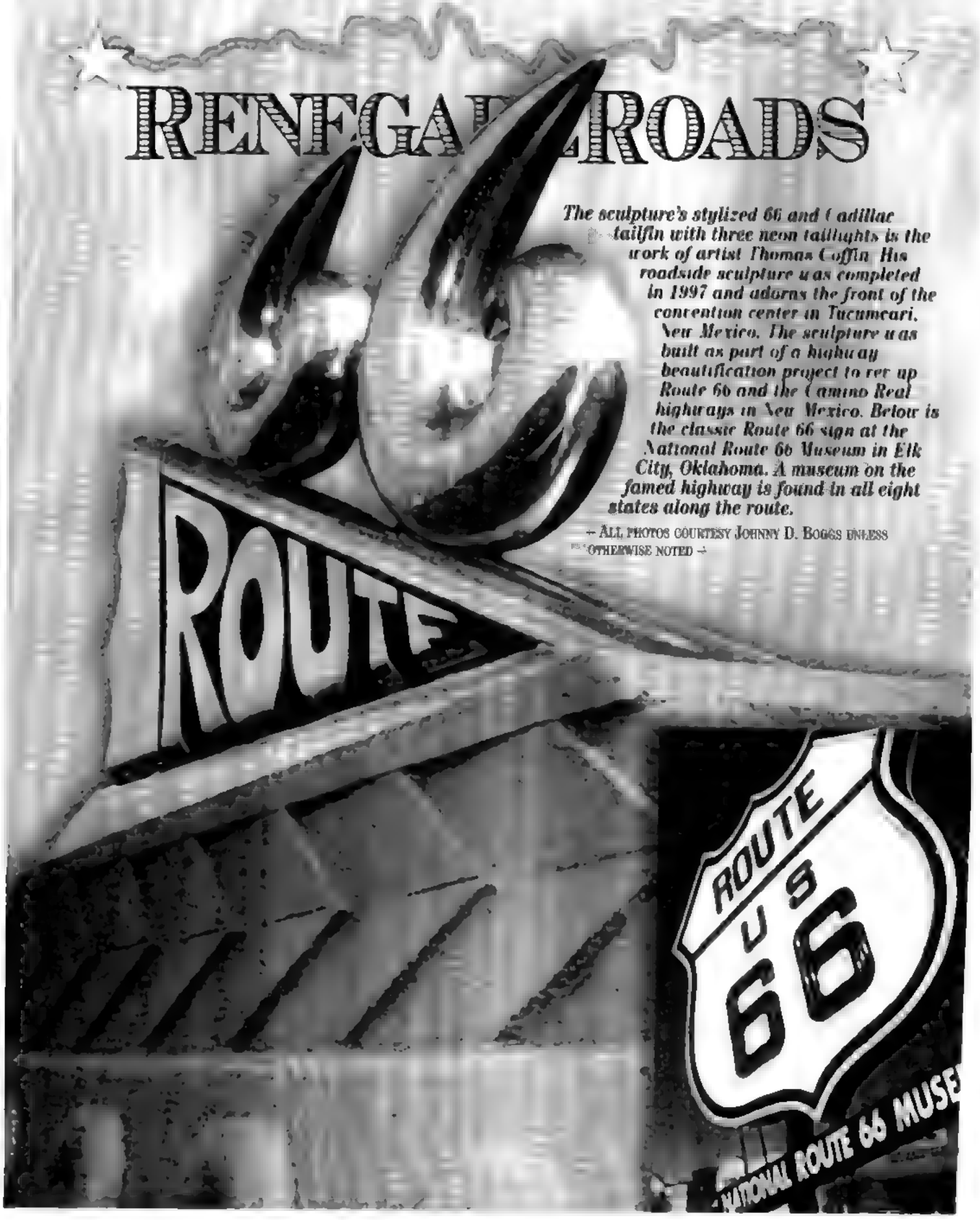
RENEGADE ROADS



The sculpture's stylized 66 and Cadillac tailfin with three neon taillights is the work of artist Thomas Coffin. His roadside sculpture was completed in 1997 and adorns the front of the convention center in Tucumcari, New Mexico. The sculpture was built as part of a highway beautification project to rev up Route 66 and the Camino Real highways in New Mexico. Below is the classic Route 66 sign at the National Route 66 Museum in Elk City, Oklahoma. A museum on the famed highway is found in all eight states along the route.

– ALL PHOTOS COURTESY JOHNNY D. BOGGS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Get your (Western) Fix on Route 66

From Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Los Angeles, California

This is an assignment I've always wanted: Follow the trail of one of my favorite TV shows to Athens . . . Rome . . . Paris . . . London. . . .

Alas, curse my luck, this is *True West*, not *Robb Report*, and the show isn't *I Spy*, but *Route 66*. But that's okay, even if my need-new-shocks ride isn't a sleek Corvette convertible. (By the way, the *Route 66* stars have Western ties: Martin Milner was gunned down as Jim Earp in *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* . . . the late Glenn Corbett as Pat Garrett in *Chisum* . . . and who can forget George Maharis in 1969's *Desperados* with Jack Palance?)

Actually, we're not dealing with the TV show, but part of the route itself (from Tulsa to Los Angeles, as this is a Western-oriented magazine). Before Tulsa's Cyrus Avery envisioned a Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway route and helped create the U.S. highway system in 1926, this was the Old West—no neon yet, just Indian trails and buffalo wallows.

These days you can get your kicks whether you prefer *Route 66* or *Rawhide*. Here are highlights for Western and Route 66 enthusiasts along what John Steinbeck called the Mother Road.

Tulsa, OK

While average Route 66 fans take photos at Boston Avenue Methodist Church and Cain's Ballroom or chow down at the Metro Diner, Western buffs need to make a detour north of America's Main Street to the Gilcrease Museum.

Oil baron Thomas Gilcrease collected art for five decades, opened a museum in 1949 and deeded his collection to this city before his death in 1962. On the Gilcrease grounds is his home, mausoleum and an inspiring display of works by 400 artists, including George Catlin, Frederic Remington and Charles Russell. It's hard to fathom finding anything more impressive on Route 66, and the trip's just starting.

Chandler, OK

If you like Route 66, you'll like Westfall's Gas Station. Built in 1927, this brick station helped the motorists keep on going with a tank of Phillips 66 during the highway's glory days. On the other hand, Chandler's favorite marshal probably wished he'd never heard of petroleum.

Postcards, such as the one above, are not the only thing Route 66 aficionados collect. Collectibles range from license plates autographed by Martin Milner (the star of the 1960s CBS TV series* Route 66*) to Route 66 road icon Snortin' Norton (a stuffed camel mascot of the Campbell 66 express freight company) to road signs and t-shirts

– True West Archives –

The Lincoln County Museum of Pioneer History salutes the highway I'm following and the lawman who still brings visitors to Chandler. Bill Tilghman, one of Oklahoma's legendary "Three Guardsmen,"

SIDE ROAD

Best of the Road

Dining

Metro Diner (Tulsa, OK); Rock Cafe (Stroud, OK); Hillbillie Chicken (Arcadia, OK); Sid's Diner (Yukon, OK); The Big Texan Steak Ranch & Motel (Amarillo, TX); Route 66 Restaurant (Santa Rosa, NM); Harry's Roadhouse (Santa Fe, NM); Route 66 Malt Shop (Albuquerque, NM); Rod's Steakhouse (Williams, AZ); Mr. D's Route 66 Diner (Kingman, AZ); Molly's Cafe (San Bernardino, CA).

Shopping

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum (Oklahoma City, OK); Route 66 Museum (Clinton, OK); Old Route 66 Antique Mall (Elk City, OK); J.M. Davis Arms & Historical Museum (Claremore, OK); Cowboys and Indians Antiques (Albuquerque, NM); Chee's Indian Store (Houck, AZ); Barstow Station (Barstow, CA); Route 66 Memories (Rancho Cucamonga, CA).

Lodging

Hotel Ambassador (Tulsa, OK); Blue Swallow Motel (Tucumcari, NM); El Rey Inn (Santa Fe, NM); El Rancho Hotel & Motel (Gallup, NM); Wigwam Motel (Holbrook, AZ), La Posada Hotel (Winslow, AZ); The Red Garter Bed & Bakery (Williams, AZ); Oatman Hotel (Oatman, AZ); El Rancho Motel (Barstow, CA).

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SIDE ROAD

Palo Duro Canyon

If you think the Panhandle is boring and ugly, you haven't visited Palo Duro Canyon State Park—Texas' version of the Grand Canyon.

Not only is this beautiful park located on a branch of the Red River that has carved a canyon almost 1,000 feet deep in places, it's also full of Western history.

Charles Goodnight staked his claim here in the 1870s after Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie's Fourth Cavalry attacked an Indian encampment on the canyon floor in 1874.

Information:
806-488-2227
www.palodurocanyon.com

hung his hat in Chandler before again pinning on a badge in 1924—at age 70, mind you—and heading to the oil boomtown of Cromwell, where he was shot dead. He's buried in Chandler.

Oklahoma City, OK

The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum is a national treasure—the Brickyard district is a wonderful place to shop and eat—but there is one particular place I'm drawn to. It's a place everyone should visit, not just Western buffs, not just 66ers. Everyone.

It's chillingly quiet on a Sunday morning, except for downtown church bells. People stand, walk, stare; all look humbled, respectful. Back in 1961, Americans watching Tod Stiles and Buzz Murdock zip along the Mother Road never envisioned a terrorist act could occur here, but that was another time.

If you haven't visited the Oklahoma City National Memorial, you should.

Clinton, OK

If you're keeping score at home, it's Route 66-1, Old West-0 on a beautiful day in Clinton. The Museum of the Western Trails shut its doors and was reborn as the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in 1995, bringing in thousands of tourists each year. How many came to the Western Trails museum? "Not as many," says Director Pat Smith, with a laugh.

After Jack and Gladys Cutberth ran the National US 66 Association for years from their basement in Clinton, the town finally got a Route 66 museum—and this is a good one. It's neon, fun and informative, taking visitors on a road history from the 1920s to the end of the 66 era. In fact, if you don't want to travel the entire road, just stop here.

Elk City, OK

Route meets West again. The National Route 66 Museum, a 6,500-square-foot facility that focuses on people instead of sites, opened in 1998. The museum shares the grounds with the Old Town Museum Complex and the Farm and Ranch Museum.

On its first floor, the Old Town Museum displays exhibits on Western Oklahoma's early days and the upstairs has the Beutler Brothers (local boys done good) Rodeo Hall of Fame. On the museum grounds are several buildings (opera house, doctor's office, schoolhouse, gristmill) illustrating more of those good old days, plus windmills—lots of windmills—at the Farm and Ranch Museum.

Shamrock, TX

The Pioneer West Museum illustrates the history of the Panhandle from the Plains Indians to NASA. Exhibits are set up as a schoolroom, doctor's office or pioneer kitchen. It's not the biggest museum in the world, and it's not Shamrock's claim to fame, but neither is Route 66.

No, Shamrock's Elmore Park proudly displays a fragment of the actual Blarney Stone (from the Blarney Castle ruins in County Cork, Ireland). Should I kiss it for luck before traveling on?

Amarillo, TX

Do Texans really believe they can grow Cadillacs in this dirt, in this weather? At Cadillac Ranch, 10 Caddies, circa 1949-63, are buried nose down at the same angle of Cheops' pyramids. It's just the kind of cheesy tourist stop you'd expect from the Lone Star State, but it does grab my attention.

You'd also expect something as big and gaudy as the Big Texan Steak Ranch and Motel, a throwback to both trail towns and truck stops, lanterns and neon. It's cheesy, but the food is good and filling—and I'm not even going to attempt to eat that 72-ouncer and all the trimmings.

Not cheesy, though, is the American Quarter Horse Heritage Center & Museum, with exhibits on the chronology of the famous breed, rodeos, ranching, racing and the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame.

Although this row of partially-buried Cadillacs is a popular Route 66 attraction in Amarillo, Texas, the installation actually dates to 1974, long after the highway had lost its importance to its successor—Interstate 40.

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Blucher Boot Co.

A lot of boot companies have outfitted Western celebrities, but few can match Blucher Boot Company's list. Founded by Gus Blucher in 1915, this small outfit has fitted Westerners from Emmett Dalton and Pancho Villa to Reba McIntyre and John Wayne.

In their small shop in Beggs, Oklahoma, south of Tulsa, leather artisans James "Smitty" Smith and Patrick Hale do things the old-fashioned way.

Stop in to say hello, tour the facility, soak up the history or order Style No. 90 and pretend you're Tom Mix.

Information: 918-267-5393

Santa Rosa, NM

Route 66 has always been about dreams, and here dreams still come true. James "Bozo" Cordova and his family opened the Route 66 Auto Museum in 2000. Bozo started building plastic model cars when he was six or seven, and by the time he was 13, he was working on restoring real cars.

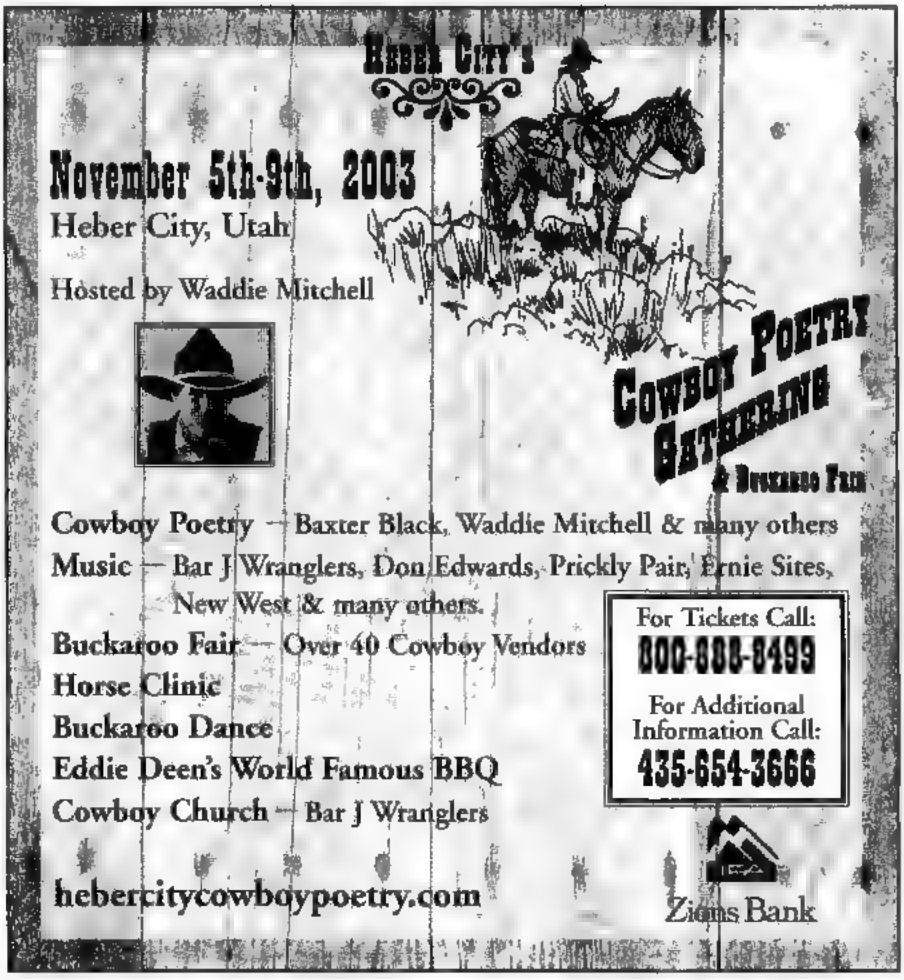
Classics that once cruised the Mother Road are on display. You can buy Route 66 collectibles, naturally, but you can also drive off in one of these vintage rides. Many are for sale.

I'm tempted to make an offer on a 1968 Ford Mustang, but it has an automatic transmission, so I'll pass. Maybe next time.

Gallup, NM

Gallup is Indian Country, Tony Hillerman Country, Old West Country and, yeah, Route 66 Country. There are galleries, trading posts and pawn shops galore, not to mention the popular Gallup Cultural Center.

Route 66 and Western enthusiasts alike can get their kicks at the Rex Museum and retire for the night at El Rancho Hotel & Motel. Built in 1937, this road favorite serves filling grub in the midst of old-time Hollywood decor, honoring the many movie stars who stayed here while filming in New Mexico.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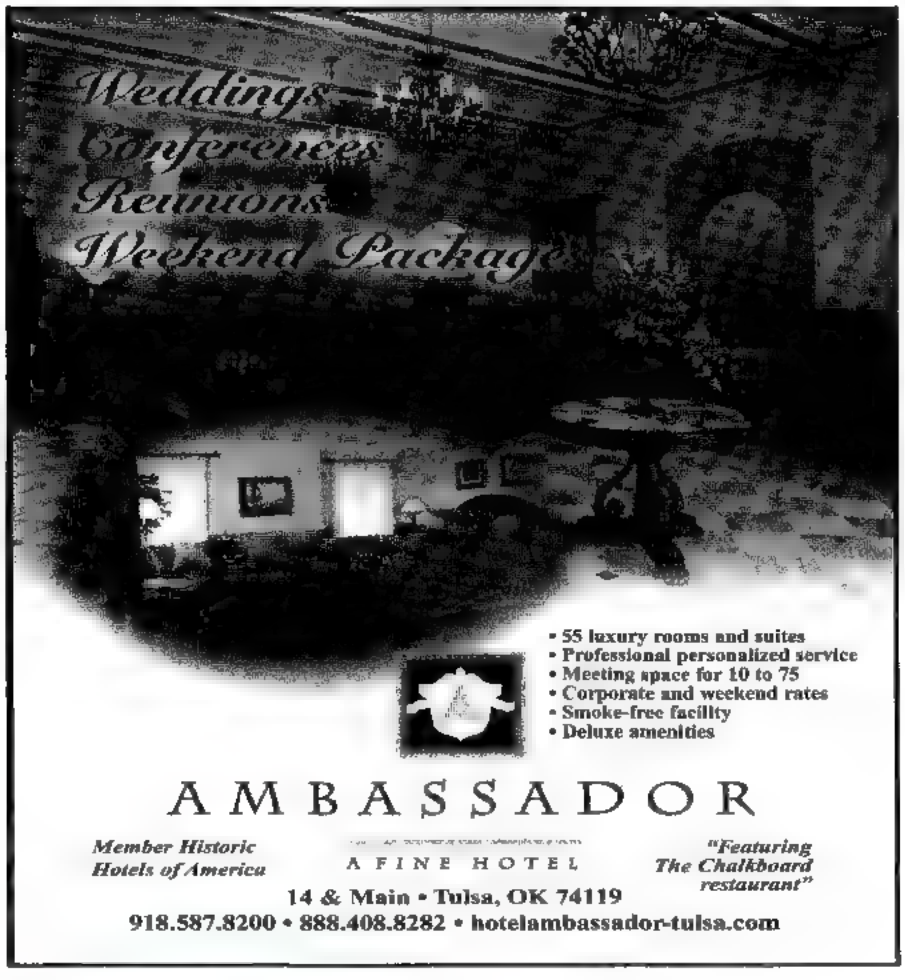

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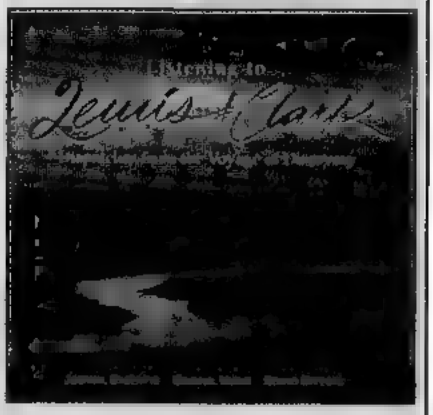

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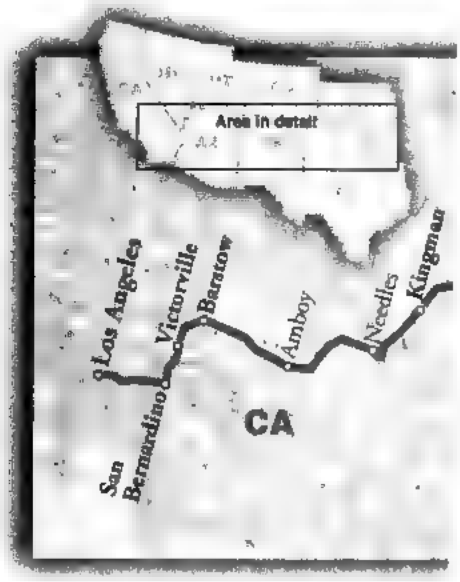

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Flagstaff, AZ

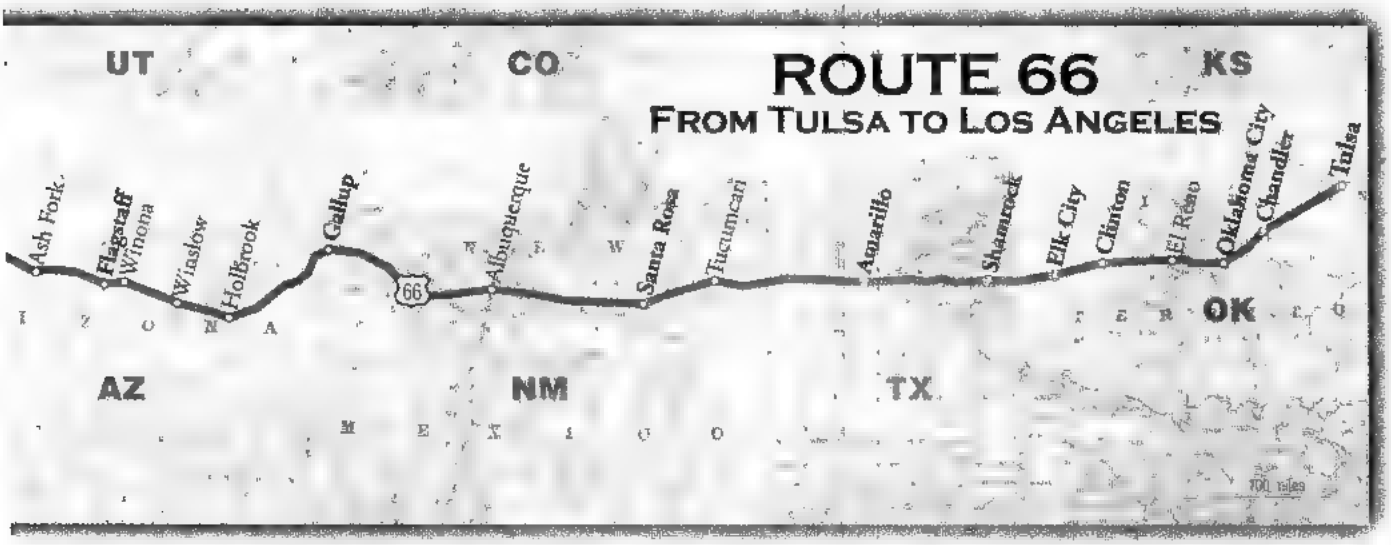
Flagstaff doesn't look like much if you're speeding along I-40, but get off the main drag and stop and smell the pines. The Museum of Northern Arizona houses a stunning collection of fossils and Indian artifacts, and is a great place to learn about the Colorado Plateau, while the Pioneer Museum offers changing exhibits as well as a history of the highway (yes, Route 66) and the West.

At the Museum Club, it doesn't matter if you're a gearhead or a cowboy. Originally built in 1931, this sprawling cabin became a honky-tonk known as the Zoo during Route 66's heyday, when traveling musicians often stopped to play a set or two. Country Western acts still headline here.

Kingman, AZ

Confession: I've only stopped here for gas, but it's in the TV song, and more important, Bob Boze Bell—high sheriff at this rag—has ties to Kingman, so I'd better include it.

Anyway, sources say that for 66 fans, the new Powerhouse Route 66 Museum is superb, while the downtown walking tour and underground gold mine tour should satisfy Western purists. Just make sure you visit the Mohave Museum of History and Arts, if only for the tribute to Kingman's favorite son: seven-time Academy Award-winning actor (okay, maybe not) Andy Devine!



Barstow, CA

Another town, another Route 66 museum. Yet the Barstow Route 66 "Mother Road" Museum showcases not only neon, but the old pioneer trails. Plus, it's housed in the circa 1911 Casa del Desierto Harvey House, the fourth of Fred Harvey's dining lodges along the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad.

Just outside of Barstow is another unusual attraction: the ruins of an 1881 silver boomtown. Calico Ghost Town—a 60-acre, 23-shop park—is a great ghost town, as it's not too run-down and not too cheesy.

Victorville, CA

Talk about a kick in your saddle seat!

The Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum has moved—say it ain't so, Gabby—to Branson, Missouri! That's too far off Route 66 for a side trip, so I'll never get to see the mounted—don't say "stuffed" or Roy's ghost will shoot you—Trigger, Buttermilk and Bullet.

I can see the California Route 66 Museum, however, so Victorville's not a total disappointment. Like Flagstaff's Zoo, this museum was originally a roadhouse that served thirsty travelers wanting to dance. Not only that, but the Red Rooster Cafe, as it was called then, was a backdrop for Neil Diamond's movie *The Jazz Singer* (and you thought *Desperados* was a bad film).

San Bernardino, CA

Personally, I hate McDonald's. Hate everything except the bathrooms.

That's why San Bernardino's Route 66 Museum—yes, another one—appeals to me. McDonald's Corp. must detest this place for claiming to be the site of the first McDonald's restaurant, circa 1948. McDonald's says its first lousy burger was served in Des Plaines, Illinois, in 1955. Nope, Des Plaines was No. 9, according to San Bernardino.

Home to the Route 66 Rendezvous every third weekend in September, San Bernardino loves its Route 66 heritage, which is more than you can say about the end of the road.

When you take the gold mine tour in Oatman, Arizona, you'll walk directly underneath Route 66 and enter the glory hole (left). The gold veins once made Oatman a happening place to live.

By Karen A. Robertson –

Los Angeles, CA

This is the city. The city that shuns Route 66 like cholera. I look for sights, but the closest thing I can find is the Petersen Automotive Museum on Wilshire, and I don't think the Batmobile ever traveled down America's Main Street.

But that's okay, because I don't think I can take one more Route 66 museum. I can take a Western museum, and LA has one of the best: The Autry Museum of Western Heritage.

After that, who knows? Maybe I'll run into Tod Stiles or Buzz Murdock in Hollywood.

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Johnny D. Boggs prefers Nat King Cole's rendition of "Route 66."

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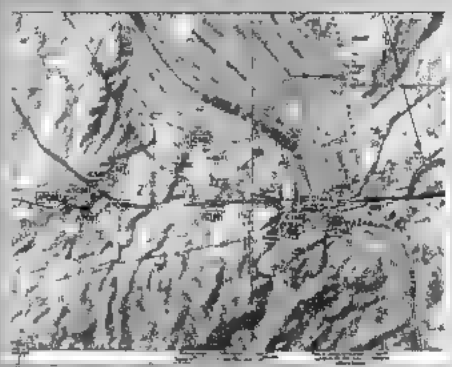

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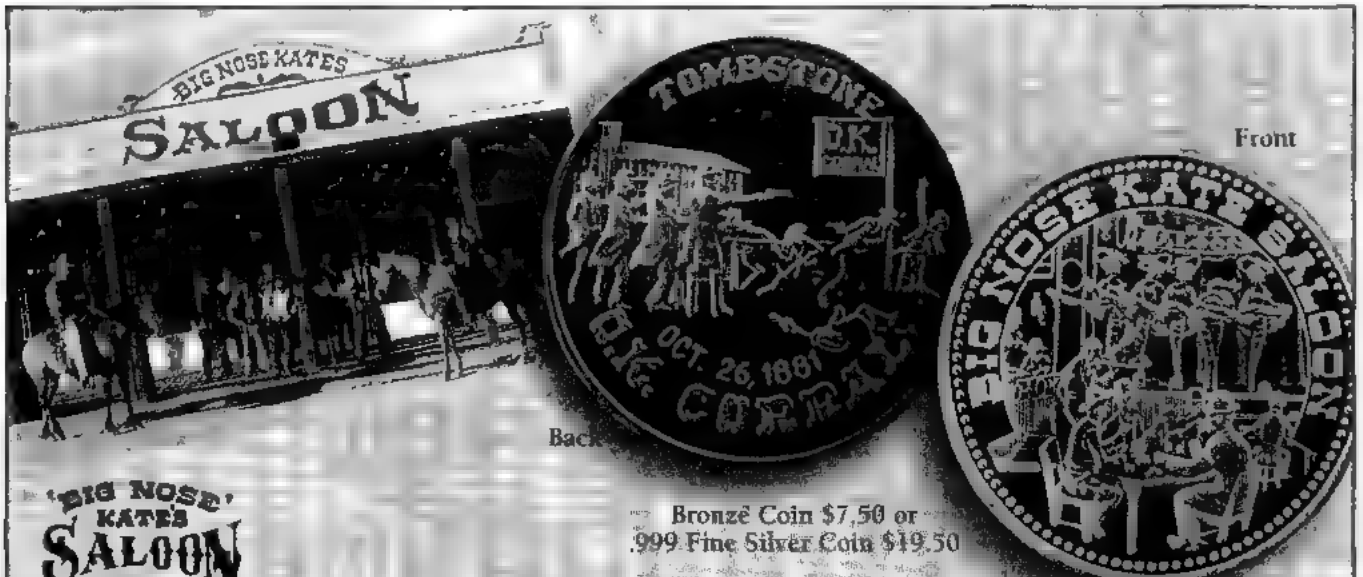

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BY M.J. VANDEVENTER

The Town Too Tough to Die

Take a day trip to Tombstone, Arizona

Although the name Tombstone implies a graveyard, this Southern Arizona town is anything but dead.

Ed Schieffelin filed a claim he named Tombstone in 1877, when he discovered a rich silver deposit near Fort Huachuca. The name was inspired by the fort's officers warning Schieffelin that he would find only his tombstone if he prospected among the warring Apaches. Later, miners who came to stake more claims adopted it as the town's name.

By 1880, Tombstone had 2,200 people; by 1882, 5,300 residents, and a larger red light district than any other town in the Southwest; but by 1900, the population had dwindled to 700. Today, about 1,500 people call Tombstone home. But tourism continually swells the town.

Four major attractions lure visitors to this isolated setting nestled between the Dragoon and Huachuca Mountains:

- The O.K. Corral, where the infamous gunfight between the Earps, the McLaurys and Billy Clanton is re-enacted.
- The Bird Cage Theatre, where theatrical events were the talk of the town.
- Boothill Cemetery, a resting place for a number of men who died with their boots on.
- The Crystal Palace Saloon (once partially burned but now rebuilt), where you can still slake your thirst at its massive mahogany bar.

History buffs will enjoy the Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park. Built in 1882, the courthouse was vacated when the county seat moved from Tombstone to Bisbee in 1929. Restoration of the courthouse began in 1955, and it was opened as a state park four years later.

For nature lovers, the Rose Tree Inn Museum boasts a white Lady Banksia rosebush, the largest in the world, covering about 8,500 square feet. For those who like exploring underground, Kartchner Caverns State Park is only 30 minutes from town.

Bird Cage Theatre was the site of numerous gunfights. Bullet holes still riddle the walls, testifying to Tombstone's raucous past.

– By Virginia Hatfield –

Visitors to Tombstone quickly find themselves walking back into the past. Along the boardwalk on Allen Street, you'll encounter the Crystal Palace, the Bird Cage Theatre and Big Nose Kate's.

Tombstone is now noted for its numerous festivals, including Rendezvous of Gunfighters in September, Helldorado Days in October and the notorious Clanton Gang Days in November.

Other points of interest include the Schieffelin Hall, Camillus Fly's Photographic Studio and the Museum of the West.

Tombstone has been the subject of some pretty famous Western movies, such as *Wyatt Earp* (1994); *Tombstone* (1993); *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957); and *My Darling Clementine* (1946).

Despite its bloody past, gunfights, prostitutes and two fires that almost wiped out the town, Tombstone has rightfully earned the moniker as the town "too tough to die."

M.J. VanDeventer is the editor of *Persimmon Hill* magazine and a frequent contributor to *True West*. **Neil Carmony** provided input for this article.

"Vegetarian is an old Indian word meaning 'lousy hunter.'"

- Andy Rooney

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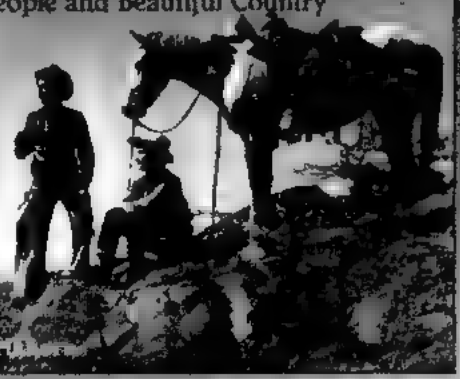

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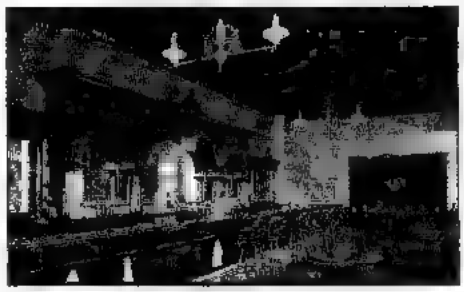

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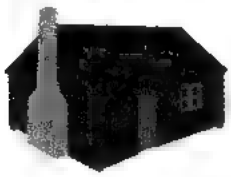

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BY CANDY MOULTON

Writing the West Together

The Gears meld science and history to write the origin of people.

Their creators deny it, of course, but Dusty Stewart and Maureen Cole (he an archaeologist and she an anthropologist) strongly resemble authors W Michael Gear and Kathleen O'Neal Gear. Certainly Dusty and Maureen have different characteristics from the Gears; after all, it is Michael who is the anthropologist and Kathleen who is the archaeologist. The fictional characters are so finely drawn, however, that you think they are real folks. (It's likely the characters are based upon the archaeologists and anthropologists that the Gears have known and worked with for years.)

Michael and Kathleen spent the first years of their writing life working in a cabin, in Colorado's Rockies, that had no electricity and no running water. Michael wrote his first novels: a science fiction series and then a couple of Westerns; Kathy penned her historical sagas.

The couple continued their scientific work and in 1986, they spent several weeks on an expansion project for Utah's I-70. That archaeological survey changed the course of their lives. When they returned home, Tor Editor Michael Seidman called to ask them what the project had uncovered. They told him of Fremont pithouses, gaming balls and Piñon caches. He asked if they would collaborate on a novel that chronicled the migration of humans into North America, followed different characters across time, incorporated the origins of distinctive Native language groups and ended with the arrival of the Europeans in the 15th century.

Michael and Kathleen Gear, with one of their award-winning bison.

COURTESY CANDY MOULTON

Thus was born the "First North American" series of books published by Tor/Forge, which began with *People of the Wolf*. The best-seller series currently has 11 titles, including its latest release, *People of the Owl*.

The People books are not your typical series. Instead, the Gears have assembled an eclectic collection of genres, ranging from mysteries, thrillers and romances to fantasies, war stories and epics. Each People book is based on archaeological and ethnographic evidence, plus oral traditions of Native people.

"Our goal in writing these books is to educate people about their continent's prehistory and increase their awareness of the resources which are theirs, which are part of North America's heritage," Michael says.

Kathleen adds, "Our books take archaeology out of the realm of cold studies and put it before the people [by creating] a fictional emotional tie."

As if the popular series aren't enough, the Gears also write books individually: Michael's *The Morning River* and *Coyote Summer*, both novels of the mountain man era, and Kathleen's *This Widowed Land*, a historical novel about Jesuit influence on the Hurons of Canada, and *Thin Moon and Cold Mist*, based on a female Civil War spy. They also collaborate on thrillers, such as *Dark Inheritance* and *Raising Abel*. In all, they've published 34 novels.

Due to their writing success, the Gears have traded their rustic cabin for a three-story home on their 1,600-acre ranch near Thermopolis, Wyoming. When they're not writing, the Gears often work with their bison—a small herd that has won them multiple awards at bison shows in South Dakota, Nevada and at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado.

And, like their character Dusty Stewart, at the end of a long, dusty day of work, Michael and Kathleen have been known to tip a Guinness.

Candy Moulton is a frequent contributor to *True West* and editor of the Western Writers of America's *Roundup Magazine*.

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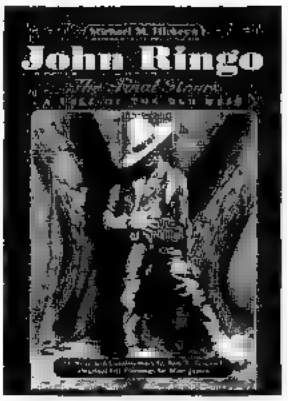

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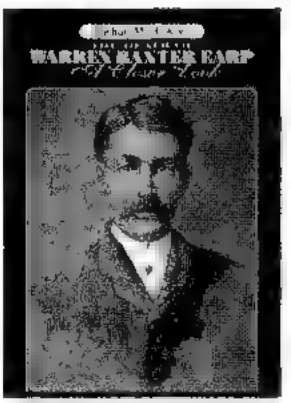

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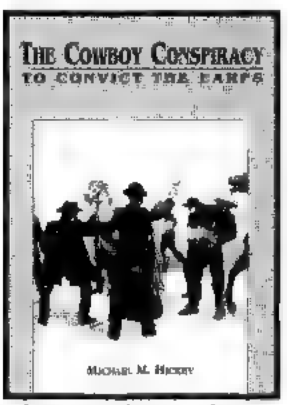

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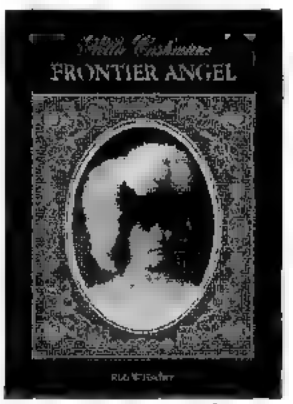

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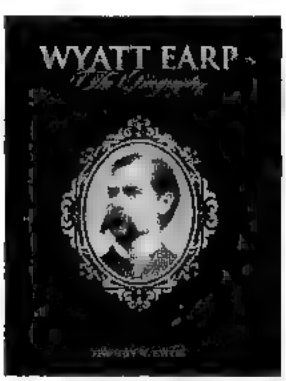

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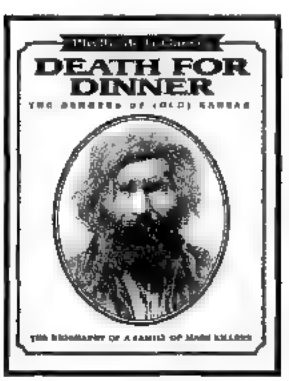

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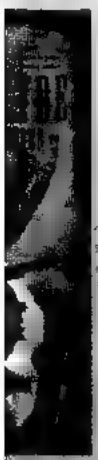

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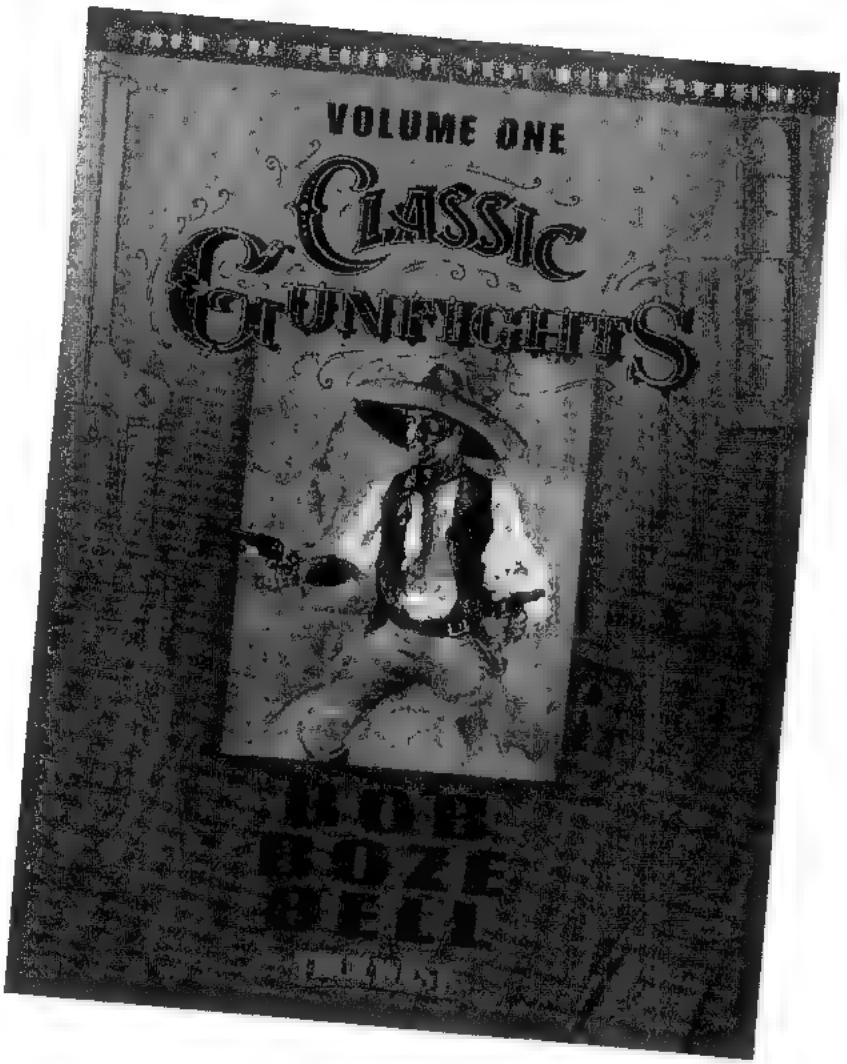

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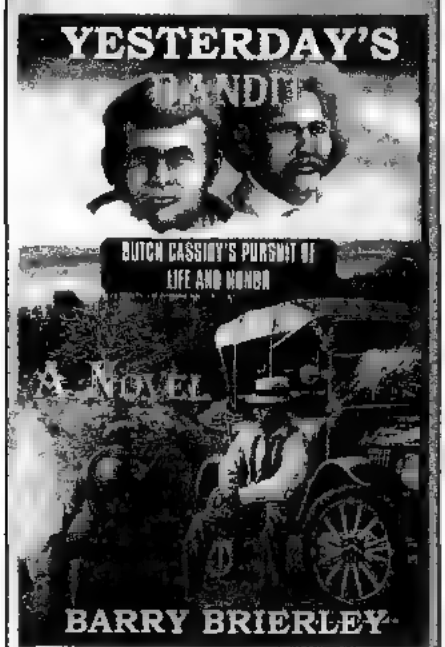

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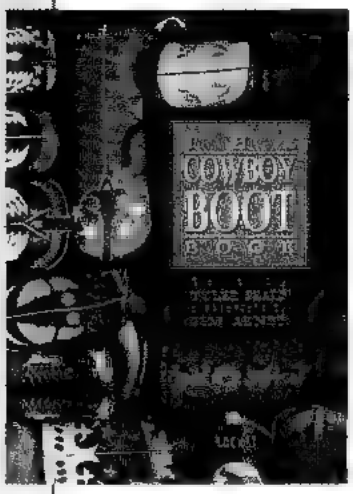

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TEXT BY TYLER BEARD AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM ARNDT, GIBBS SMITH, $19.95, SOFTCOVER.

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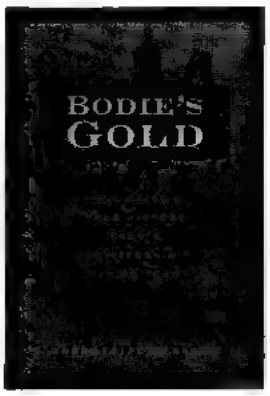

BODIE'S GOLD

MARGUERITE SPRAGUE, UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA PRESS, $34.95, HARDCOVER.

Described by Marguerite Sprague as a collection of true tales, the book combines information from old newspaper files and books (by the Victorian J. Ross Browne and modern scholar Roger McGrath) with interviews of old-timers to offer us a good, informal social history of Bodie. Now a California state park, Bodie is a ghost town in the high-desert country just west of the Nevada line. The mining town, which began in 1860 and peaked around 1880, acquired a wicked reputation because of its high per capita murder rate and its large number of saloons and brothels. However, the citizens were pretty law abiding, though Bodie had a Chinese joss house before getting its first church. Sprague's book fills us in on Chinatown and local Paiute Indians as well as American and European miners. —RICHARD H. DILLON

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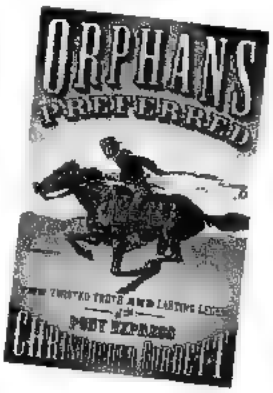
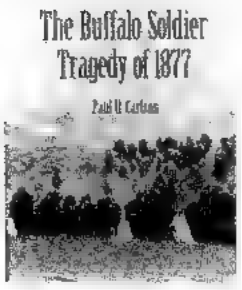


Corbett tells the sort of yarns that anger Pony Express purists, like the story of Broncho Charlie, said to be the last Pony Express rider. In exposing the numerous myths surrounding the short-lived enterprise, Corbett elegantly attempts to get to the truth. But Corbett's book best reminds us that the Pony Express saga would be incomplete without the colorful, and often exaggerated, additions made by: Col. William Visscher, Buffalo Bill Cody, Ned Buntline, Mark Twain and Frederic Remington. —MEGHAN SAAR



THE BUFFALO SOLDIER TRAGEDY OF 1877

PAUL H. CARLSON, TEXAS A & M PRESS, $24.95, HARDCOVER

The Llano Estacado of the Texas Panhandle could be unforgiving and deadly. Although the country had been explored and its water trails mapped by 1875, Capt. Nicholas Nolan's hot summer expedition of '77 was a complete disaster. Joining buffalo hunters fervently on the trail of Comanches who had rustled their horses, the Irishman neglected to allow his black troopers to fill their canteens before they set out; then he failed to order strict water rationing on the march. The result was zero Comanches captured; four buffalo soldiers dead from thirst; one crazed by sunstroke and thirst; and four men court-martialed for desertion. After the expedition, the shattered command dragged its way back to Fort Concho, minus 30-odd horses and pack mules. A real bonus of the narrative is Paul Carlson's discussion of the buffalo soldiers in general and of the role bison hunters played in the history of the harsh Staked Plains. —RICHARD H. DILLON

BULL'S-EYE: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY OF ANNIE OAKLEY

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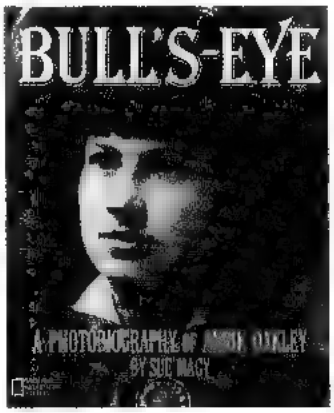

The historical photographs alone will blow you away, as Sue Macy sets out to tell the true story of Little Sure Shot, who transforms from a seven-year-old hunter to a 25-year-old professional shooter for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Annie Oakley remains an enduring part of American history, as her legacy has lived on in TV shows, books, movies and plays. She comes to life again in this delightful coffee-table book, written in an easy-read style for everyone to enjoy. —MEGHAN SAAR

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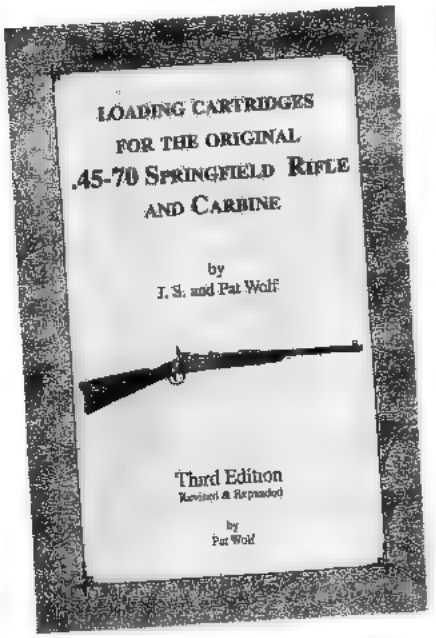

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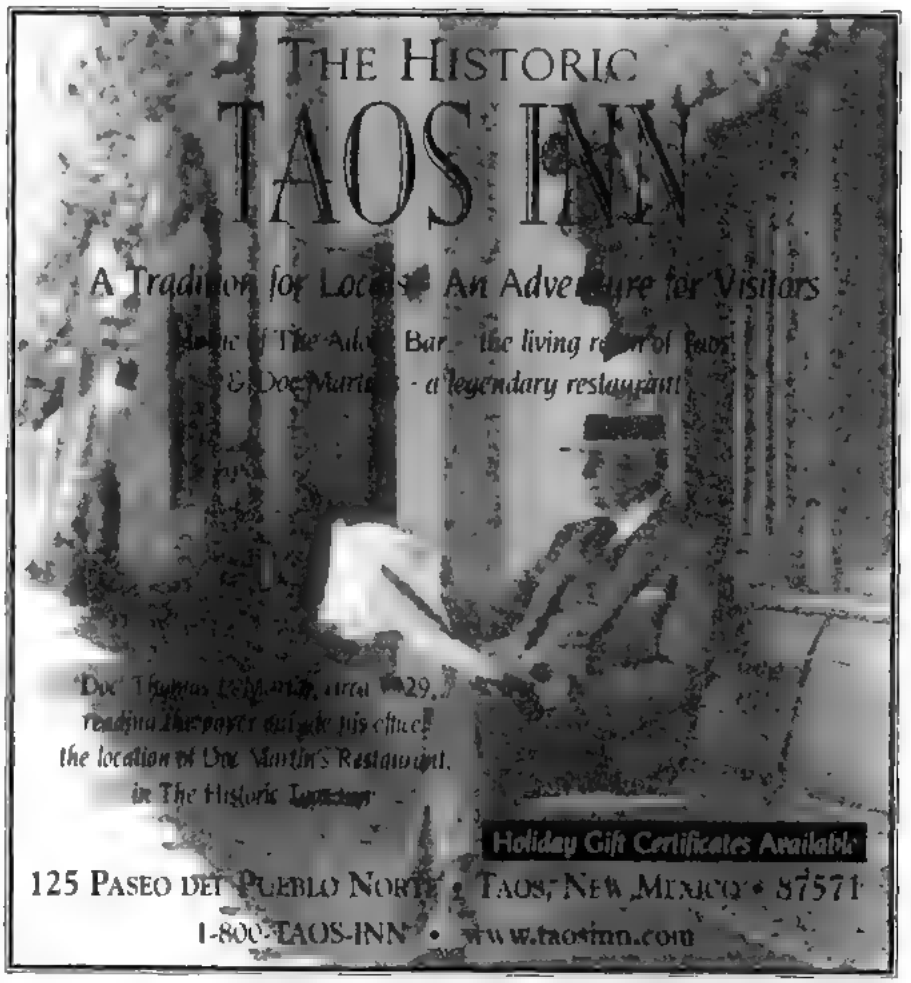
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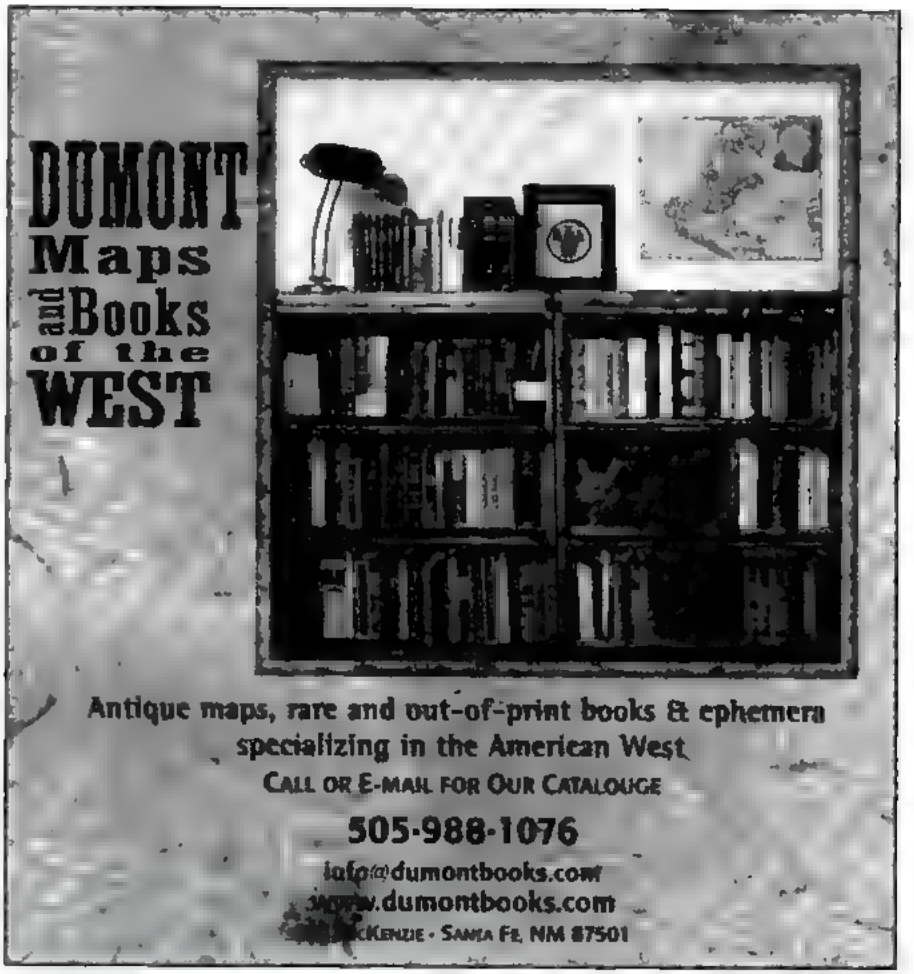
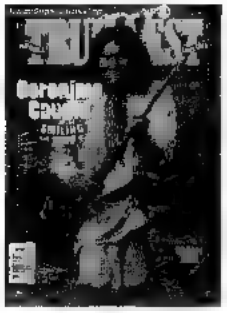


Back Issues Going, Going . . .

Feb./Mar. 01 **
Wyatt Earp

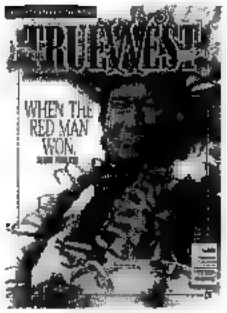


April 01
Geronimo

May/June 01 * **
Custer

July 01
Cowboys & Cowtowns

Aug./Sept. 01 **
Wild Bill Hickok



Oct. 01
Red Man Won

Nov./Dec. 01 **
Doc Holliday

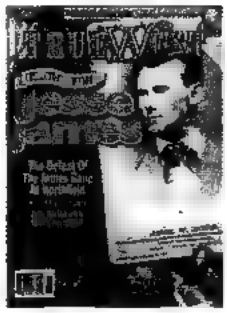
Jan. 02
Uncommon Men

Feb./Mar. 02 **
The Alamo

April 02
Scouts

May/June 02 **
Wayward Women

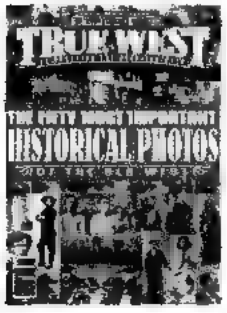
July 02
Texas Rangers



Aug./Sept. 02
Jesse James

Oct. 02
Billy the Kid

Nov./Dec. 02
Butch & Sundance

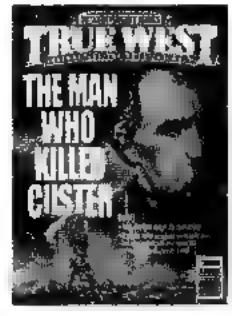


Jan. 03
50 Photos

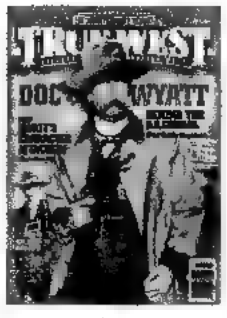
Feb./Mar. 03
50 Guns

April 03 **
John Wayne

Travel Special 03
Renegade Roads



May/June 03
Man Who Shot Custer



July 03
Doc & Wyatt

Aug./Sept. 03
Billy & Pancho

Oct. 03
Vera McGinnis

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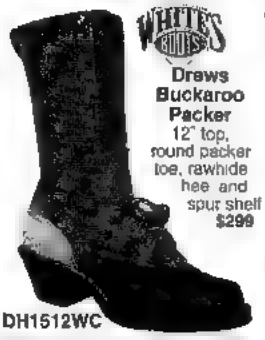

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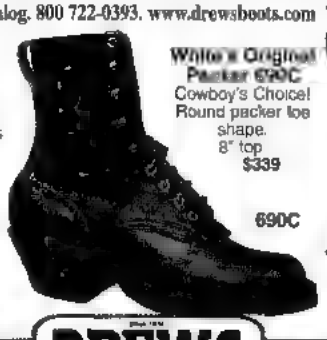

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PALO DURO RECORDS
Country Music, Texas Spirit

BY CORINNE BROWN

Finding Their Own Way

The Mickeys are definitely not lost.

"We're proud of being twins," states Amy Mickey, half of the latest female duo to hit the country music charts. "The only time it's a negative is when people can't get past the obvious. There's much more to who we are."

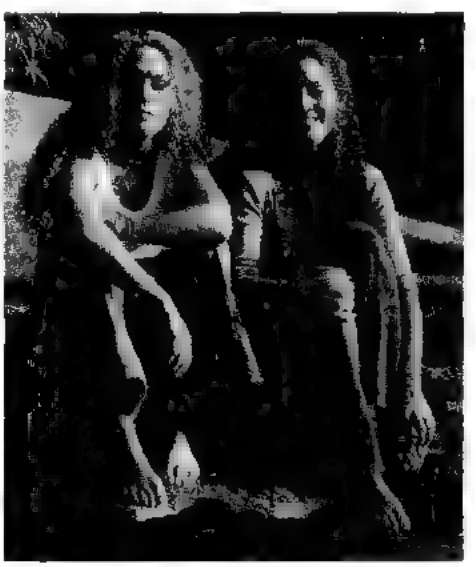
Without waiting for Nashville to roll out the red carpet or a record company to offer a contract, the sisters formed their own label and cut their first CD in 2003, appropriately titled *Finding Our Way*. Their album is richly packed with original music sung in dazzling harmonies, and the sisters' vocals are a fresh entry, backed by some of the best musicians in Nashville. Listeners are taking notice in America, Europe and even China. For a first release by virtual unknowns, the Mickeys' CD is certainly sending Amy and Julie on their way.

"It's like being in the middle of a tornado," Amy explains. "We're trying to keep up." After years of playing clubs in Nashville, they're finally getting concert bookings outside Tennessee, though they're still hanging onto their day jobs.

Thanks to Landshark Music Producer John Albioni, who put the session players together and arranged affordable recording services, the Mickeys are reinventing folk music by gently lacing it with a Country Western feel. The sisters owe a special debt to Wanda Veck, who plays everything from fiddle to dobro to acoustic guitar.

Trained to sing a capella in church choirs, the Mickeys have been harmonizing since they were young girls growing up in Northern Michigan. Now, at age 27, they have their own unique sound.

"What's neat is that we can still do an acoustic act or play with a band," Amy says. "Each of us plays a variety of instruments as well, so we don't have to depend on anyone but ourselves. The main thing is, we have total control. Though we might not make more money, we would never go commercial or sell out, we like to be in charge of the art and the business."



With friends and family by their side, twin sisters Amy (left) and Julie Mickey plan on singing their hearts out for a long time.

– Courtesy Amy and Julie Mickey –

Inspired by balladeers, such as Don Williams and Dan Fogelberg, the duo has perfected a compelling style. Their music covers topics of the heart, life's lessons, dreams and reminiscences. "We're happy that we can be played on a lot of different formats," Julie says. "We're partially accepted by many genres: folk, country, bluegrass and soft rock. In fact, we've released one of our favorite cuts, 'Smoke and Mirrors,' to the country world and are excited to see how well it does as a single."

With the enthusiastic management of Nashville's Martha Moore (So Much Moore Media), there's no telling where the Mickeys can go. The pair has received a wealth of emotional, spiritual and financial support from friends and family in making their dream begin to come true. Now, it's up to music fans to recognize their talent.

Corinne Brown is a native Coloradan, Western author, staff writer for *Persimmon Hill* and fashion writer for *Western & English Today* and *True West*.

"To know how country folks are doing, look at their barns, not their houses."

- Old Vaquero saying

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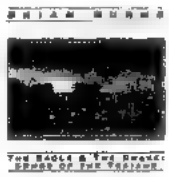
FREEDOM'S CHILD

Billy Joe Shaver

COMPADRE RECORDS, 2002

It's said that pressure and heat are needed to make a diamond. In 1999, Shaver lost both his wife and mother to cancer; in 2000, his son Eddy died of a drug overdose; and in 2002, Shaver suffered a heart attack during a performance. A pioneer of the '70s country music outlaw movement, Billy Joe gets better with time and tragedy. Robert Duvall, who cast Billy Joe in *The Apostle*, says Shaver "turns himself inside out to put himself into the music." On *Freedom's Child*, Billy Joe Shaver is indeed a precious jewel. —GUS WALKER

THE EAGLE & THE SNAKE: SONG OF THE TEXIANS



Brian Burns

PALO DURO RECORDS, 2003.

You don't have to be from Texas to love this album. Brian Burns provides the richest mix of music from and about the Lone Star state ever laid down on one CD: he sings songs by Tom Russell, Hoyt Axton and Marty Robbins, to name a few, as well as his own tracks, which include his recitation of a letter penned by Lt. Col. Travis, commander of the besieged Alamo garrison. Burns' deep voice evokes legends, while his smooth style crosses genres from folk to country to Tejano. "Texas is not only the center of the universe," he says, "it's also the gateway to the West, the third coast and the third world." Enter the realm of the borderlands. Burns makes it easy. —CORINNE BROWN

IT'S JUST THE NIGHT

Del McCoury Band

McCOURY MUSIC, 2003.

The heart and soul of bluegrass comes alive on this latest release from Del McCoury Band. Now on their own label, this band has created a crisp, clear mix of vocals and sound. The cut "Mill Towns" laments the loss of the old ways, while other cuts reconcile the need to move on. The title cut reminds listeners that twilight shadows, lurking just beyond eyesight, are merely the night playing its usual tricks. This CD is a must-have for anyone who enjoys good music.

—SANDY WHITING

HANG ON FOR LIFE

4 Wheels Down

E & G MUSIC, 2002

If you ever spend a weekend at the historic Connor Hotel in Jerome, Arizona, you may be lucky enough to catch 4 Wheels Down in the hotel's Spirit Room bar on a Saturday afternoon. The band describes its music as "old time country and bluegrass," but it's really a talented group that knows how to honor a much wider range of traditional music. The band's original compositions are delivered with obvious respect for the members' musical roots and with their own Arizona mountain flair. —LARRY JOHNS

MY TURN TO HOWL

Penny Jo Pullus

RUBY DOG MUSIC, 2002

Penny Jo pulls out the stops when it's her turn to howl, unleashing a powerful singing voice that alternately punches and croons as the emotional context flexes. Starting with a Texas two-step beat, this disc takes that country sound and injects it with pop-singer style to create a dynamic medium for storytelling. On her third CD, Penny Jo confidently uses numerous melodic styles to pull together her vision of a modern, complex woman.

—BILL GROLL/ AUSTINAMERICANA.COM

OUTLAW ANNIE'S THE BASICS OF MOUNTED SHOOTING

ANNIE BIANCO-ELLETT, 2003

This 90-minute video by CMSA World Champion Mounted Shooter and SASS Overall World Champion Mounted Shooter Annie Bianco-Ellett is a superb primer for anyone seeking an introduction to the fast-paced sport of cowboy mounted shooting. Filmed at Annie's ranch in Cave Creek, Arizona, the film takes students through the basics of gun handling, ammunition, horse training, riding patterns and costumes. Annie even discusses the importance of equine ear plugs. This video, which is interspersed with footage from live competitions, will be enjoyable even for those who will never compete. —R.G. ROBERTSON

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James McMurtry
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Flowers and Liquor
With his wry humor and heartbreaking observations, Hayes has been compared to Townes Van Zandt. Find out why.

Suzy Bogguss
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
Swinging Christmas classics and new holiday originals. Special guests include Chet Atkins, Delbert McClinton, and Ricky Skaggs.

Mike McClure
Twelve Pieces
Debut solo album from the former front-man of The Great Divide.

Townes Van Zandt
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Ten exceptional unreleased tracks from the legendary Texas singer-songwriter, circa 1966.

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18 tracks from several architects who defined the original Outlaw Movement along with current Texas young guns who are fueling the modern outlaw comeback.

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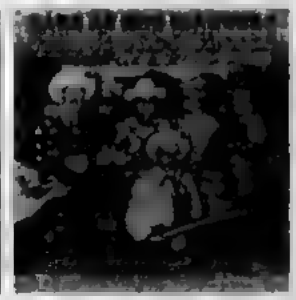

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Finest

In Each Issue We Profile Some Of The Finest Purveyors Of The Old West.

Catalena Hatters

Some folks have a lifelong passion for horses, cattle or even stamps. But for Sammy and Carolyn Catalena, their passion is hats. The couple has always wanted to make hats, but not just any style of hats. Being from Bryan, Texas, the Catalenas naturally wanted to make cowboy hats.

Sammy Catalena steams a hat in order to shape it.

– Courtesy Catalena Hatters –

Twenty some years ago, Sammy was traveling through Florida, selling alfalfa cubes for a feed store, when he heard about a custom hatter who wished to retire. The owner agreed to sell his business to the Catalenas, but only if they promised to build custom hats and not resell the equipment and sizing ovals to a large manufacturer. For over two decades, the Catalenas have kept that promise. Today, Sammy—who's also a rancher and PRCA stock contractor—Carolyn and their two sons hand-crease all of their hats after custom-fitting each one

Catalena Hatters' most recent innovation is the "Gus crease," inspired by the character Gus McCrae (played by Robert Duvall) in the telefilm *Lonesome Dove*. The hat has generated orders not only from across the U.S., but also from as far away as New Zealand, China and East Berlin. Having seen the "Original Gus" model hat on a member of the *True West* staff, we can assure you that it'll make you look good even if you never get the urge to kick a pig.

Tommy Alverson, George Jones and Willie Nelson are among the celebrities who wear Catalena hats.

– Courtesy Catalena Hatters –

Cow Pattys Chocolate Candy

Cow Pattys' chocolates make great gag gifts.

Courtesy Cow Pattys Chocolate Candy –

Back in 1993, Patty Woods and her father decided to quit smoking. Needing an incentive, they bet each other that the first one who backslid would have to eat cow manure. Patty lost.

Knowing her father would hold her to their wager, she decided to try making something edible that looked like the real thing. Patty knew a cow patty when she saw one. She and her husband own a cattle ranch in Caballo, New Mexico—a place she now dubs the "crap capital of the world."

Figuring that chocolate would taste better than—use your imagination; we're a family magazine—Patty made a mold of real cow poop and then cooked up a Cow Patty that looked so much like its namesake that her father nearly fainted when she chomped down on her first bite.

Several Cow Pattys later, Patty realized she had mastered her barnyard culinary skill when her husband spied one of her creations in the kitchen and said, "That's it! When you start bringing real cow crap into this kitchen, I draw the line."

Told that it was chocolate, he responded, "Oh sure. You'd lie and say that's chocolate."

In 2000, Patty finally "borrowed" some time from her primary occupation as a nurse at the White Sands Missile Range and began selling Cow Pattys Chocolate Candy to the public. In December 2000, she added Horse Apples to the mix, and yes, they look just like green—meaning fresh—horse droppings. Patty's nine flavors range from chocolate peanut butter to chocolate chili and they're available in either the cow or horse variety.

So, the next time anyone tries to give you any crap, tell 'em to make sure it's Cow Pattys Chocolate Candy.

— R.G. Robertson

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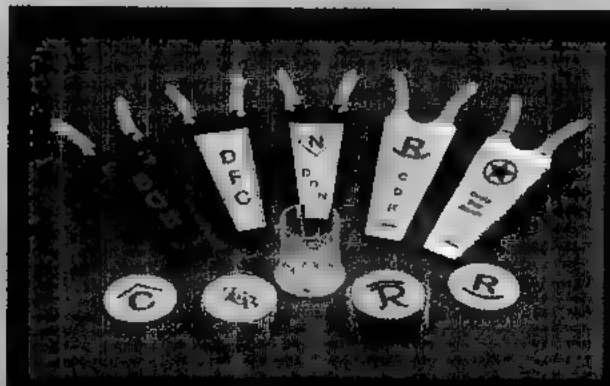

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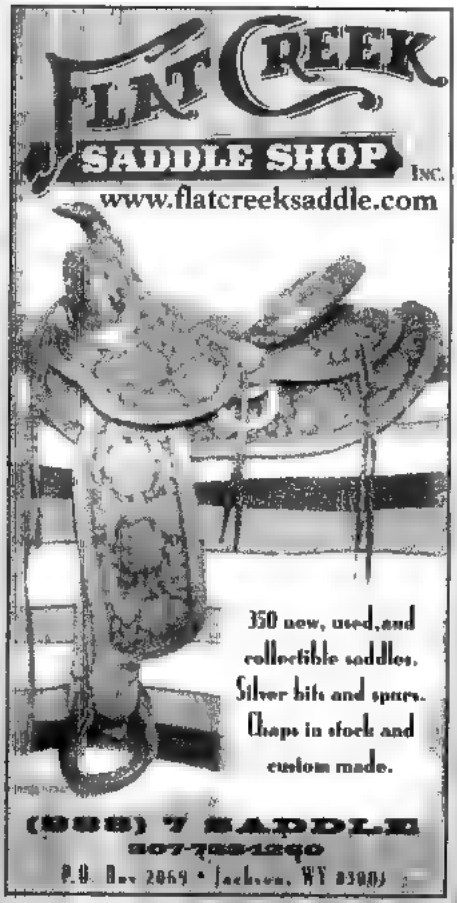

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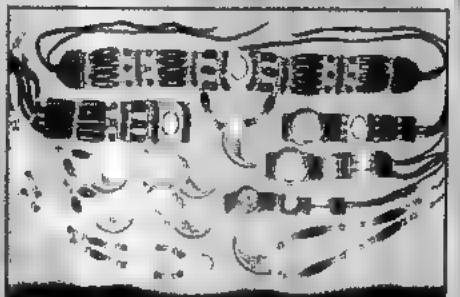

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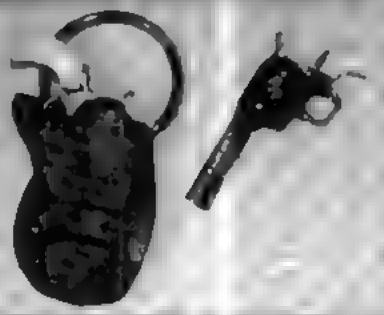

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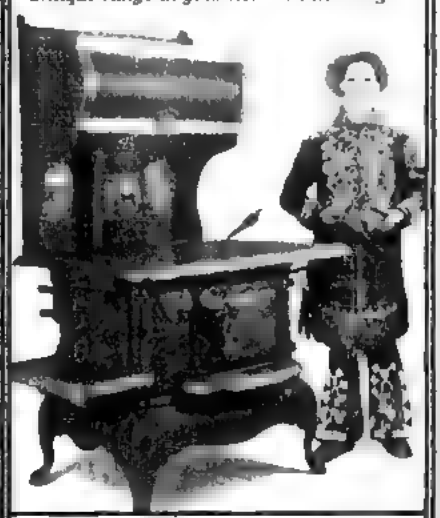

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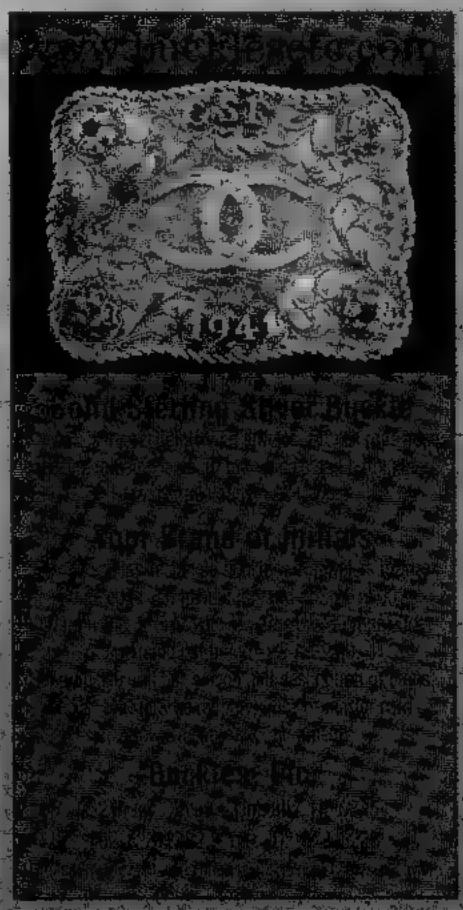

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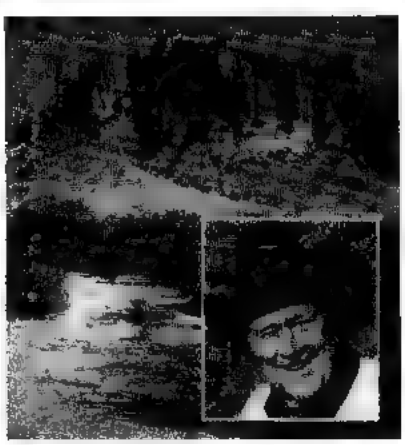

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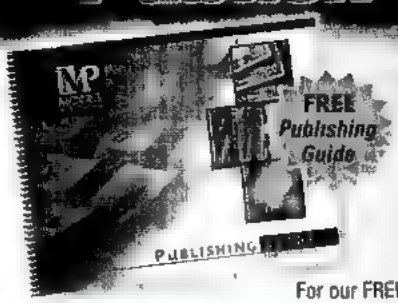

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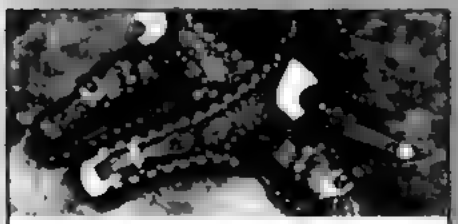

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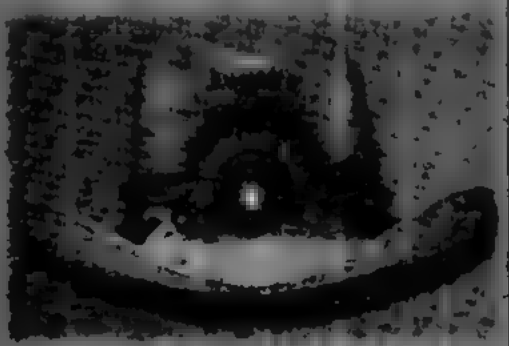

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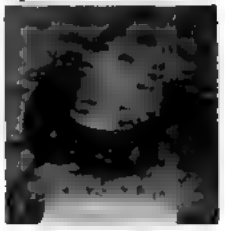

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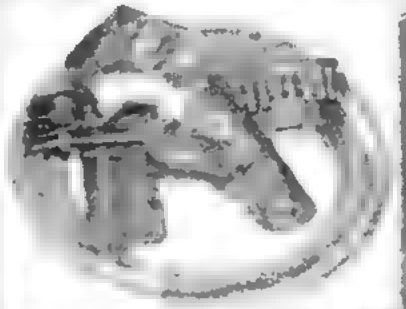

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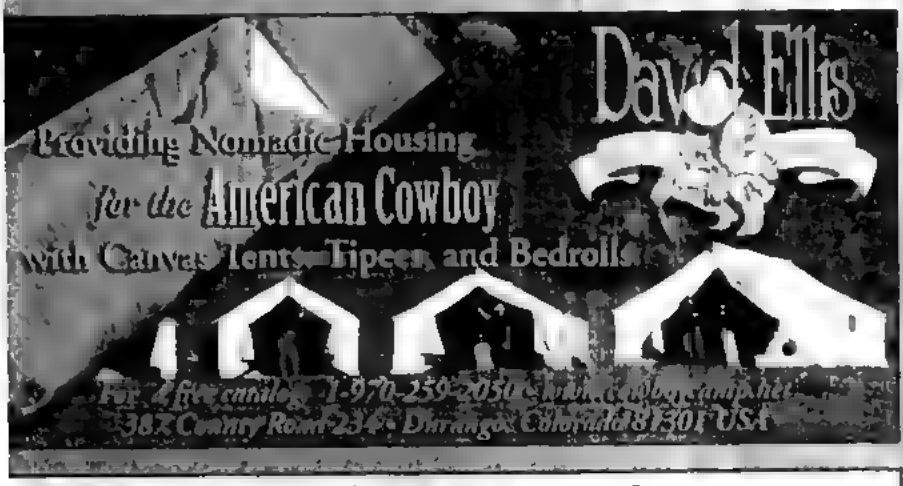

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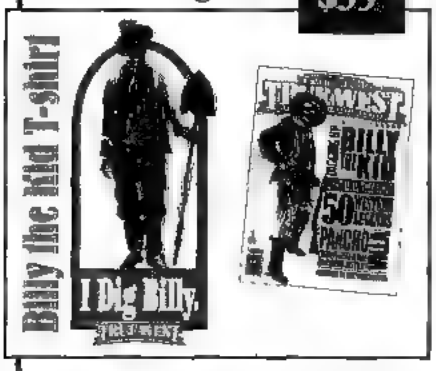

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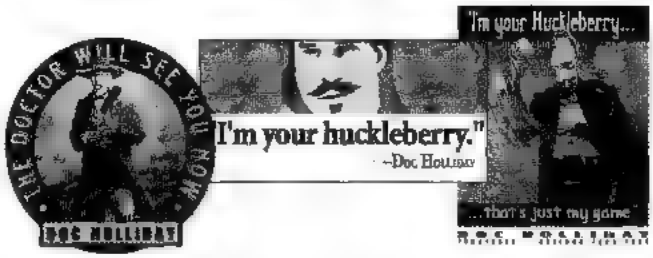

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Connecting with Davy

Interview with Billy Bob Thornton.

Don't ask Billy Bob Thornton what he thinks of John Wayne's portrayal of Davy Crockett, because he made a point of not watching that movie. Nor the old TV series. Nor anything else. "I didn't want to be influenced," says the man who is the latest incarnation of the Tennessee politician who died at the Alamo.

Of course, from his days as a kid, Thornton remembers Fess Parker's version: "The great thing about Fess Parker's portrayal is that he played him as a rural guy, which I loved. You know, when Davy Crockett was in Congress, they made fun of him because he talked like a hillbilly—I didn't realize he was really that much of a backwoods guy."

Thornton still sees himself as a backwoods guy, having grown up in rural Arkansas. But there's even more to tie him to the character he portrays: "Davy Crockett's birthday is Aug. 17 and mine is Aug. 4 and so we astrologically have the same sign. We're Leos, who are known to be people who love people, who are gracious and gregarious and tale spinners."

He laughs when told his costar, Dennis Quaid, said this about *The Alamo*: "This is a movie that had a hillbilly celebrity playing a hillbilly celebrity." Thornton admits that's a pretty accurate description.

To prepare for the part, he read some diaries and historical books—although he says reading is difficult because of his severe dyslexia—but got the most help from the historians who were advisors to the movie. "It was like having a walking history book," he says. He remembers how impressed he was with the description he read in one of the Mexican soldier's journals that said Crockett had died "with grace and courage and he was well behaved."

Billy Bob Thornton defends the Alamo as Davy Crockett.

– By Dena Newcomb/Touchstone Pictures

Thornton says he was happy for the chance to play the character "all kids want to play—but the magnitude of that name and playing such a legend, it's scary."

It helps that Thornton considers Westerns "some of the greatest movies ever made." His all-time favorite movie is *High Noon*, "because it's got everything—courage and cowardice, friendship, loyalty, fear [and] betrayal."

He stresses he isn't a "star" of the upcoming movie. "This movie is such an ensemble, there are not any stars, the movie is the star."

—Jana Bommersbach

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Has an autograph of Sitting Bull, while he was with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, survived?

Sharon Franks
Keokuk, Iowa

The McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, has such an autograph.

An autographed picture of Sitting Bull. During an 1885 tour with Buffalo Bill, the chief was allowed to sell autographs and photographs.

TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

Do you know anything about a mysterious stagecoach robbery in Mohave County, Arizona? The stage and loot were both lost.

Howdy Fowler
Yucca, Arizona

The story is factual. In June 1880, an outlaw named Hualapai Joe Desredo and two cronies robbed the westbound stage from Beale Springs (Kingman) to Needles.

They pilfered the strongbox, containing $200,000 in gold ingots, from the nearby mines, then ordered stage driver Johnny "Jump-Up" Upshaw to hit the trail pronto.

The outlaws found the loot too heavy to carry, so Hualapai Joe stuffed a small amount in a leather pouch and buried the rest, intending to come back for it later.

A posse caught up with them, killing two gang members outright and mortally wounding Hualapai Joe. In his dying breath, he admitted robbing the stage and burying the gold. When asked about the missing stagecoach, he said, "It vanished into nowhere."

Around 1940, the missing stage was discovered, along with bleached human skeletons, by a recluse living at Yucca. The loot was never found.

Was there a real shootist, who marked notches on his gun to show how many people he'd killed? If not, where the heck did that notion come from?

Emma Bull
Bisbee, Arizona

For this one, I contacted an old friend, Jim Dunham, a technical advisor for Western films and an expert on Old West gunfighters.

Jim says he's never read a historical reference to the practice, but guesses that notching guns was a Hollywood, or at least a fiction writer's, idea. Real men of violence tended not to treat it as competition.

I agree with Jim but there is always a possibility that someone may have carved a notch on the handle of his pistol for the same reason one took a scalp from a fallen foe. It was a trophy, or in the case of notches, something to commemorate the fight.

In the July 2002 issue of *True West*, I noticed that old group pictures of the Texas Rangers do not show them wearing their badges, or are they not visible?

Mario Munoz
Via the Internet

The Texas Rangers didn't have a standard badge until they became part of the Department of Public Safety in 1935. All carried paperwork earlier, signifying they were Rangers, but not all wore badges.

The Texas Ranger Museum at Waco has a group photo of some Rangers during the 1880s. Following the group photo, individual photographs of the men were taken. Apparently there was only one badge between them and it had a flaw. In the individual photos, the same flawed badge keeps appearing, so apparently one of them had a badge and the rest pinned it on for their photos.

For more information on the Texas Rangers, go to texasranger.com or visit their fine museum in Waco.

Texas Rangers posed for this photograph without badges.

– COURTESY ROBERT G. MCCUBBIN –

Can you tell me anything about Dave Rudabaugh and Tom Pickett?

Ron Mance
Cicero, Illinois

Much has been written about "Dirty Dave," a notorious outlaw who rode with Billy the Kid and was reputed to be the "only man Billy ever feared."

Rudabaugh was captured at Stinking Springs on December 23, 1880, and at his trial, was sentenced to hang. He broke jail on December 3, 1881, and escaped to Mexico, where he killed two Mexicans and wounded another in a cantina fight before he was killed.

Rudabaugh was beheaded, and his head paraded on a pike through the streets of Parral, Chihuahua.

Tom Pickett also rode with Billy the Kid and Dave Rudabaugh.

After the Lincoln County War, Pickett drifted into Arizona and

worked as a cowboy for the Hash Knife, drove a stage from Fort Apache to Holbrook, and for a couple of years, was a deputy sheriff. He died in Winslow, Arizona, with his boots off.

Alleged photos of Dave Rudabaugh's head. (Inset) Dirty Dave's head being paraded on a pole around Parral, Chihuahua.

TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

Ask the Marshall Update

In an answer to a question about the first train robbery in America (October 2003), I mentioned the Reno Gang made the biggest haul in a single heist.

I recently attended the WOLA (Western Outlaw-Lawman History Association) Convention in Kansas City and listened to Mark Boardman, the organization's new president, present a fascinating talk on the artful thief, John Reno.

Boardman estimated Reno's take was $1,000,000, far surpassing the James-Younger Gang, which stole over $200,000 in 16 years.

Reno was an all-around badman, adept at counterfeiting, selling illegal booze, arson, theft and murder. Much of his criminal activity was non-violent and his specialty was burglarizing county treasurers. It was said some 20 burgled county treasuries netted a cool $500,000.

One could ask, why aren't John Reno and his gang better known?

Good question.

Marshall Trimble is Arizona's official historian. His books include *The Arizona Trilogy* and *Law of the Gun*.
If you have a question, write: Ask the Marshall, PO Box 5008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327 or email him at marshall.trimble@scemail.maricopa.edu

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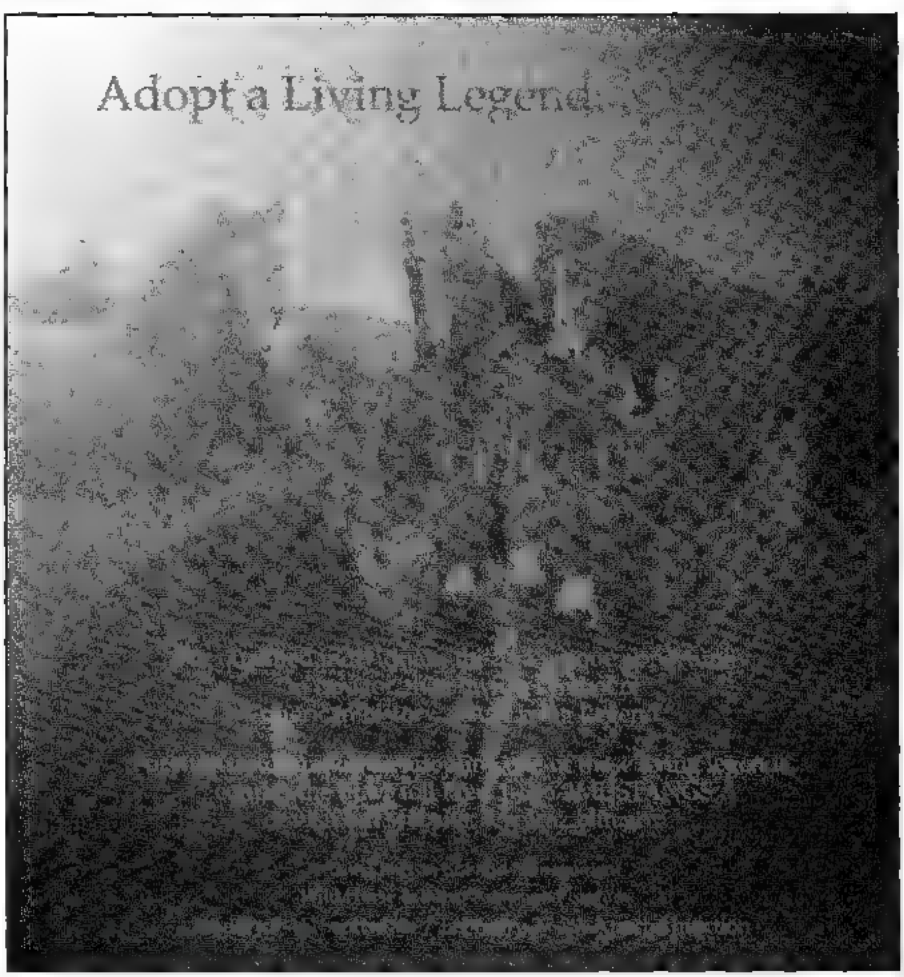

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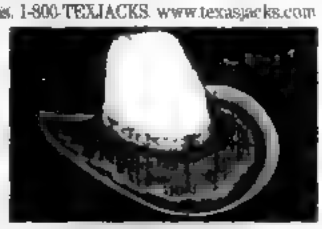

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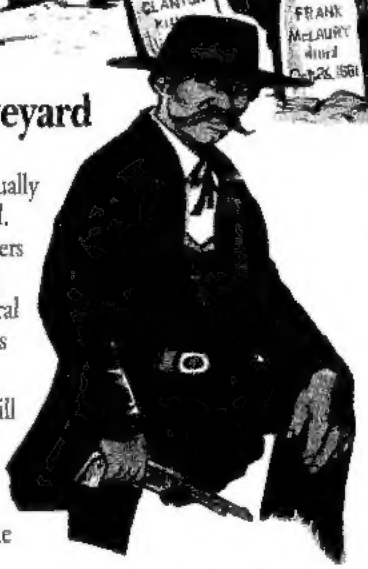

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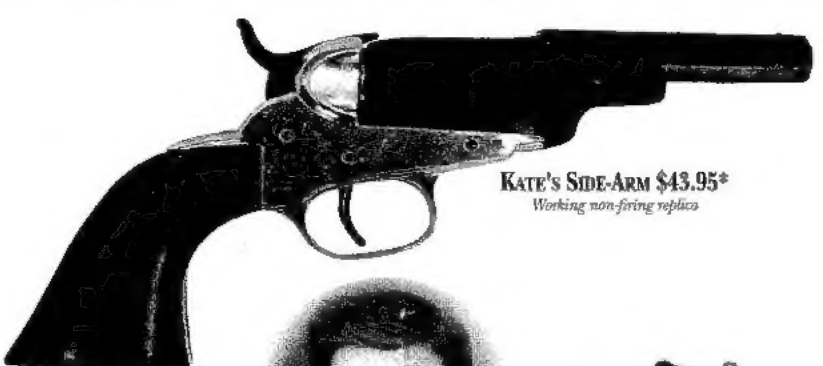

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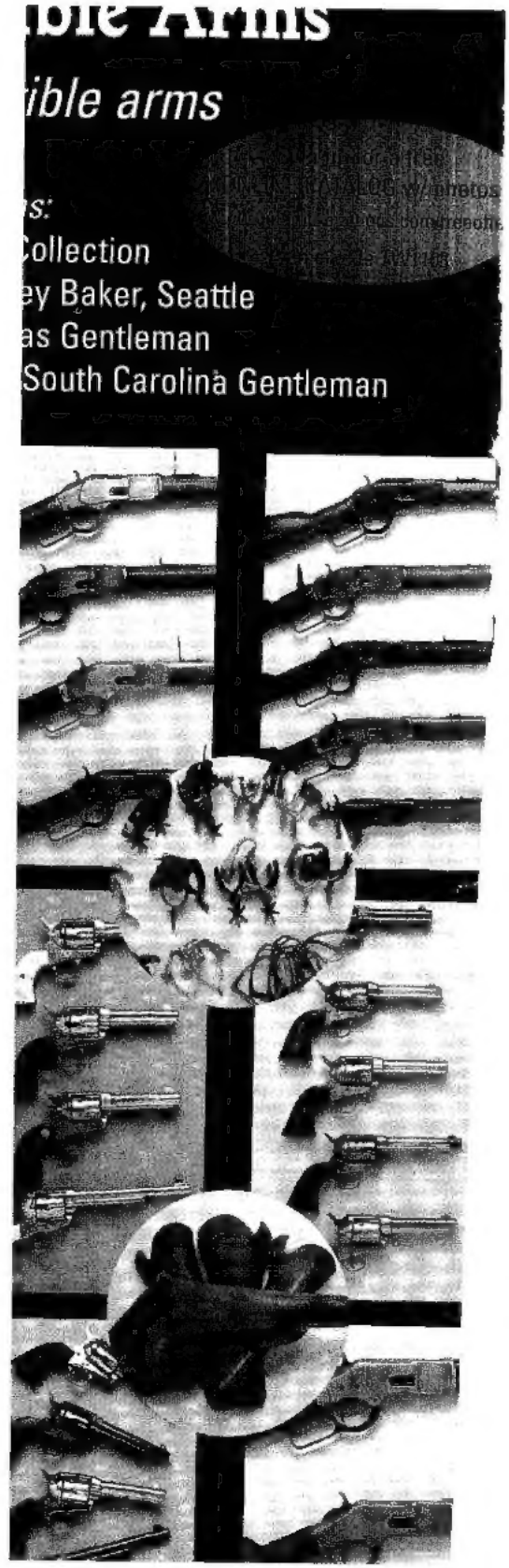

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